The BRAZEN SERPENT

McCLOREY

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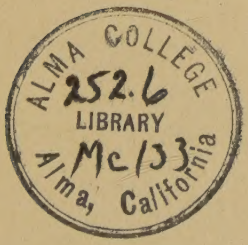
BY

REV. JOHN A. McCLOREY, S.J.

University of Detroit

SECOND EDITION



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INTRODUCTION

One of the paradoxes of Christianity is the obliviousness of most so-called Christians with regard to Christ. Christ stands before men to show them how to live; and few consider Him. Isaias said of Him: "A Child is given to us, the Prince of Peace." But the majority of men will not be led by the Child nor accept His peace. They are sufficient unto themselves. They can play the game of life without His direction. He will do for pietists but not for practical men of the world. He is relegated to the church. He has little place in the office, the workshop and society. He will do for the moment of death but not for the busy years of life. The thought of Him is to be an occasional distraction from business, a pleasant bit of spiritual sentiment, a casual ethereal indulgence, a rare luxury, like the reading of poetry or the contemplation of the stars; like being impressed by the ocean or awed by a mountain or charmed by a strain of music or regaled by the fragrance

of a flower. But tell the generality of men that the spirit of Christ is to permeate the flesh and blood, the bone, sinews and nerves of their daily lives in the world, and they will wonder. Tell them that Christ is to be with them when they make love and when they make war; when they dance and when they fight; when they work and when they rest; at their feasts as well as at their fasts, and they will wonder. They forget that Christ went through the phases of a human life to show them how to live. Oh! if Christ were a vivid reality to us how little hardness toward labor there would be among employers! How little sullen violence among laborers! How little ill-feeling in the home! How little frivolous indulgence among the rich! How little complaining among the poor! If Christ's spirit had been abroad the European war would not have occurred. But because men were too earthly and selfish; readier to make claims than to make concessions; fonder of rights than of charity; more willing to take than to give, therefore we see what we see! Christ is the Teacher and Leader of men; and if they will not enjoy His peace they must endure their own wars; if they will not follow Him to

heaven they must choose the alternative of hell.

When the Hebrews of old were being bitten by fiery serpents Moses raised aloft among them a brazen serpent upon a staff, a symbol of Our Saviour on the cross. He bade the multitude look at it for their healing. Those who obeyed were cured; those who refused obedience perished of their wounds. For centuries the Church in the midst of stricken humanity has been pointing to the Figure upon the Cross. Those who raise their eyes to It and accept It are saved; those who knowingly decline this easy requirement are lost.

The purpose of these sermons, preached in St. Peter and Paul's (Jesuit) Church, Detroit, Michigan, during the Lent of 1919, was to help in the work of perpetuating the saving office of Moses and the Church.

THE AUTHOR.

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HEROD AND JOHN THE BAPTIST

St. Matthew, ch. 14 vs. 1-13.

"At that time Herod, the Tetrarch, heard the fame of Jesus. And he said to his servants: This is John the Baptist, he is risen from the dead, and therefore mighty works show forth themselves in him. For Herod had apprehended John, and bound him, and put him into prison, because of Herodias, his brother's wife. For John said to him: It is not lawful for thee to have her. And having a mind to put him to death, he feared the people, because they esteemed him as a prophet. But on Herod's birthday, the daughter of Herodias danced before them, and pleased Herod. Whereupon he promised, with an oath, to give her whatsoever she would ask of him. But she, being instructed before by her mother, said: Give me here in a dish, the head of John the Baptist. And the King was struck sad. Yet because of his oath, and them that sat with him at the table, he commanded it to be given. And he sent and beheaded John in the prison. And his head was brought in a dish; and it was given to the damsel, and she brought it to her mother. And his disciples came and took the body, and buried him, and came and told Jesus. Which, when Jesus had heard, he retired from thence by a boat, into a desert place apart."

THE BRAZEN SERPENT

THE PROFANATION OF LOVE

"Thou shalt not have thy brother's wife!" John the Baptist said this to Herod.—And Herod murdered John and lived on with the woman of infamy.

"Thou shalt not practice any uncleanness!" The Church says this to the world. —And the world, the meretricious world, painted and guileful, still shows her pearly teeth between scarlet lips and undoes souls with glances of her languishing eyes.

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St. Ambrose describes the Herodian scene with trenchant eloquence. The chaste man, he says, is slain by adulterers; the judge of two criminals is awarded by them the death penalty which they themselves deserve. The reward of a dancing girl for her pirouetting is a Prophet's head. The cruel order of execution is given amid the merriment of a feast. With brutal irony, a banquet begins and a banquet ends the process of murdering a Saint. From lighted hall to filthy

dungeon; from filthy dungeon back to lighted hall;—that is the course John goes. Who would not expect,—when a girl asks a favor of the Tetrarch on his natal day and messengers hurry from the festive board to the dungeon of the Saint to carry out the desire granted her by the Tetrarch in regard to him;—who would not expect to see the manacles loosened from his wrists and the Prisoner led back to the banquet hall, to be regaled with delicious viands? But, oh unnatural hard-heartedness amid soft delights! His bloody head is carried aloft in a dish into the midst of the splendid gathering; and with delicate hands, exquisite grace and childlike simplicity Salome dances up to the glowing banquet board with her gory trophy and sets it down, as the crown and center-piece of the ghoulish repast. Oh inhuman prince, look upon this degrading spread, worthy of a degenerate like you! Stretch forth your lily hand and dabble playfully in the crimsoned dish and let the rich red sanctities of his virginal blood drop, ruby-like, from your fingers of debauchery; so that no refinement of cruelty and no contrast between his purity and your obscenity may be lacking in this pageant of sacrilege!

Raise aloft the globe-like fountain of his blood and slake from the channels of his cut veins your thirst for cruelty which rich draughts from plenteous goblets could not quench! Look at those staring eyes, even in death a witness of and against your profligate excess! Look at them! They are shutting out even now, with closing lids of modesty, the vision of this unholy place! And that golden tongue which frighted you in life is silent now; and yet I see you fear!

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One of the most striking figures of the Gospel narrative is John the Baptist, the Precursor of the Lord. We see him coming forth from the tawny sands of the desert, where his spirit had been exalted by solitude and prayer. He is fasting and clothed in a garment of skins and his lips are tremulous with scathing denunciation of sin. "In those days," we read, "came John the Baptist, preaching in the desert of Judea, and saying: 'Do penance, for the Kingdom of God is at hand. I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness: Make straight the way of the Lord. Ye offspring of vipers, who hath shown you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth fruits worthy of pen-

ance.—For now the axe is laid to the root of the tree. Every tree that doth not bring forth good fruit shall be cut down and cast into the fire.' " The blazing wrath of the Prophets of old was less than his. There was power in his voice and a stern strength in his mien that brought the sinners of Israel to their knees.

Now John, the Preacher of penance, was the Herald of the Lord. In the hill-country the Angel had said of him before his birth: "He shall be great before the Lord. He shall go before Him in the spirit and power of Elias, to prepare unto the Lord a perfect people." John himself said: "There cometh after me One mightier than I, the lachet of whose shoes I am not worthy to loose. I have baptized you with water, but He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost. Behold the Lamb of God, behold Him who taketh away the sins of the world. This is He of whom I said: After me there cometh a Man who is preferred before me, because He was before me."

And Christ Himself bearing witness to the nobility of John, said to the multitude: "What went you into the desert to see? A reed, shaken by the wind? But, what did

you go out to see? A man in soft garments? Behold, those in soft garments are in the palaces of Kings. But what did you go out to see? A prophet? But I say to you he is more than a prophet. For he is the one of whom Scripture says: Behold, I shall send my messenger before you, to prepare your way. There is not a greater of woman born than John the Baptist."

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Yonder by the Sea of Genesereth a mansion of luxury dreams amid verdure, beneath a slumbrous sky, in the voluptuous warmth of an oriental afternoon. At set of sun breezes come in from the sea to fan its recumbent lethargy and to wake it to the festivity of night. And when the stars show, its windows glow, flashing figures pass in and out between portals, music pulsates out of its beautiful depths like puffs of perfume from a flower-bed, and pleasures encompass it till dawn. Herod Antepas, the Tetrarch of Galilee, is the center of the scene;—Herod and Herodias, his companion in sin, whom he has stolen from his brother's hearth, along with Salome, her daughter by Philip, her true husband. Their life and that of their parasites, is one

of continuous debauchery. Feasting, dancing, music are the fair shell around the corrupt kernel of their immorality.

One day Herod hears of John;—for even to this nook of aristocratic indulgence the news of John's overwhelming forcefulness among the people has penetrated.—"Ha, ha," he says, "I have it! A new feature on my program of festivity! Now, what would you think of having John come and preach at my court? Our course of entertainments is exhausted. My courtiers and ladies are jaded with pleasures. Unless we draw up a new program, life here will become altogether stale and insipid. John will be a novelty. Oh, the tang and verve of listening to an austere sermon from this man of the desert in his garment of skins, resounding in the golden hall amid the extravagance of my splendid court!—And then the thrill of all of us experiencing the unwonted luxury of penitence! A rare psychological treat! And I see already tears smudging the painted cheeks of my libertines; and their woe-begone looks at him and their trembling at his scathing words. He will call them a brood of vipers, threaten them with hell and urge them to repent.—

This will be an experience! We must have him! He shall come! We shall feel what it is to be penitents; and at the next carousing I shall have a vote of thanks from my court, I doubt not, for this rare, piquant, emotional treat."

Herod muses thus.—John, we may imagine, will visit him. He will preach for him. But Herod little dreams of the personal, direct character of his sermon on penance and chastity in the golden hall.

The time is set. John comes. He crosses the threshold of that unholy place and stands.—He stands erect, handsome, contemplative, penitential, chaste, fearless, a lover of Jesus; the idol of the people;—a white flame of spiritual energy. He stands;—around him ranged a circle of fragrant, splendidly vested, expectant aristocracy. Some men chuckle at the joke of it all; some girls titter at his outlandishness; the Tetrarch assumes an air of mock solemnity. Herodias is polite as becomes a woman of the world, trained to meet decorously any set of circumstances however ridiculous. Some wager on the text he will take. Some are settling with themselves how to deport themselves in this unwonted

scene. One says: We'll see now if his popularity is deserved. Another says: This is a novel experience, indeed.—In the midst of it all, with dynamic rapidity like a motor, instantaneously started full force, he directs his whole soul, thrown into words, against the prince; and "Thou shalt not have thy brother's wife! Thou shalt not commit adultery! Thou shalt not defile thyself and thy court! Thou shalt not live in uncleanness!"—is the tremendous burden of that tremendous speech. He speaks not of the sins of the people outside. He speaks not of virtue and vice in general. He speaks not in silken half-apologetic terms of "the naughtiness" of the court. He speaks not to the courtiers and ladies. But, straight into the faces of Herod and Herodias he flings his gauntlet of abuse without apology; without introduction; without the least assuaging of rebuke. Flings it;—and stands erect in silent victory!—And Herod is benumbed; and Salome whimpers; and the court fidgets. But Herodias, self-possessed amid the general shock, conceives black hate.—Herod struggles to recover his equanimity and then looks round, grinning stupidly, to show his poise! In another mo-

ment he burns with indignation at the insolence; and cries out: "Hustle this madman to a cell!"—And John is seized and hurried away; and the court breathes again; and Herod wipes the perspiration from his brow; and musicians try to cover up with a veil of sweet sounds the breach of court etiquette which John had made; and Herodias resolves that this insult to her shall be avenged. And Brethren, you know the rest. Scripture narrates it in simple words. Ambrose describes it with graphic intensity. John dies; Herod lives. The irony of fate! But the justice of fate! John lives; Herod is dead. For John men love. Herod men execrate.

Herod, Herodias, Salome, their degenerate court and John the Baptist are realities today. Today we have the same love of pleasure; the same broken matrimonial vows; the same Apostolic denunciation of wickedness and the same punishment of revenge oftentimes visited upon the heads of apostles who dare to attack immorality entrenched.

Many a Herod throws aside his lawful wife because her youthful charms are gone or because her character, forsooth, is not

compatible with his or because her very loyalty is a bore or because the mere monotony of monogamy has become unbearable or because his heart has long since been burning for another.

Many a modern Herodias prefers the obligations of social life to the obligation of motherhood; thinks more of preserving her personal grace than of enriching the nursery; forgets that the idea of wife connotes the idea of children; enjoys the rights of matrimony without carrying its burdens; pleads health and the fear of death as an argument against the creation of new lives; arrogates to herself God's exclusive right of birth-control; imagines that quality and numbers in the matter of offspring are irreconcilable; says that income is not adequate to the needs of a large family;—in a word, places Mrs. Sanger on a pedestal and makes that woman's diabolical doctrine an article of her own profession of faith.

Many a Salome, in modern youthful guise, foments passion by means of dress, inviting manners, and well-timed, partial, half-unwilling concession. She rightly resents the double rule of morality for men and women; and then wrongly lowers her rule to the level

of his instead of trying to raise his to the level of hers. "Charms are for display," she says, "and I'll catch his love even though by so doing I kill his soul. I don't propose to be a nun; I must act as the world acts. Mothers are too conservative; modern evolution applies to the manners of young women as well as to other things. 'Liberty' is the great cry of the day; let us therefore have liberty in the matter of sex. Besides one must yield points, to gain victories and to retain conquests. Moreover a boy-like spirit of good-fellowship is more comfortable and more catchy than girlish reserve. Men consider modesty a sort of prudish thing. Prudishness is out of date; we must be a bit daring to attract. And then I must have all the fun I can before settling down; and when I marry, I'll marry a man with a fat purse, whatsoever sort of man he happens to be. Indeed, a strain of rakishness in his manner and a touch of wickedness in his past add piquancy to his attractiveness. And I'll be sure not to marry for love. Love is too disturbing a thing. It may have its rapture but it also has its anguish. Love disturbs the even tenor of one's way. Love is the sister of self-forget-

fulness; and I don't want to forget myself. Marriage is one of the institutions of respectability; a necessary evil, without which a girl would be considered an oddity. Therefore, I shall engage in it in order that I may be normal, have a home and live in society as others do."

Auguste Comte calls this sort of thing the disease of the western world. Forster, Professor of the University of Zurich, says: "In literature, in the drama, in the comic papers, and in the fashionable world the seamy side of life is becoming daily less shocking and more popular. Moral sin and moral failure serve to provide material for an heroic pose, while the ten weaknesses of man have become the ten commandments of the new ethic. Pleasure-seeking in the sphere of sex is replacing all social and religious considerations. The artificial restriction of the family is making a rapid conquest, while the facilitation of divorce is looked to as a further means of escape from the great moral problems and responsibilities of marriage. The old idea of loyalty has become a thing of mockery, and sexual purity is looked upon as unhealthy." Tolstoi says, "In these days life is no longer

directed by conscience;—conscience accommodates itself to life."

George Bernard Shaw treats of the holiest relationships of man and woman with a flippancy that divests them of all sacredness. The Swedish authoress Ellen Key says that loyalty should last only as long as passion lasts and that the free-lover may pass on to as many sexual unions as may appeal to his or her erotic emotions; and that a person who feels strongly enough need not ask himself whether he has a right to the feeling; for right and wrong in love affairs are only external forms of slavery. She speaks to women of "self-realization," "enhancement of life," "soul-affinities," of "the great ever-lasting love," somewhere ahead of them; of "living out one's own life" and of "the foolishness of loyalty in the sphere of sex."

She and sex-apostles like her, say:

Since God gave us the passion why may we not indulge it as we please?

The sense of sexual shame is an antiquated superstition; and free and open thought and speech about things sexual is the healthy privilege of our enlightened age.

Unwedded motherhood is as honorable as

any other; it is only under the ban of a mere social and religious formality.

The immensity of human love should not be cramped and cabined in by an indissoluble marriage.

It is better to marry again and to be happy than to be miserable in the first union.

Marriage is made for happiness. If a marriage does not secure that, why, leave it.

The number of children should be regulated by parents; not by nature and God. The fewer children, the better they will be. Science has enabled us to master the forces of inanimate nature; why not apply science, and master the force of birth?

. . . . . .

Hence, the worst feature of modern decadence is its present-day justification of itself. There was a day when men, sinning, felt the sting of conscience and the disgrace of their fall, and struck their breasts. But now they justify crime; sanctify shame; pride themselves on sexuality; and glory in scientific sinning. As Forster says, So many things, sacred and essential to human dignity in sexual affairs, have been turned upside down by many moderns that the paradox of Macbeth comes to mind:

"Fair is foul, and foul is fair,
Hover through the fog and filthy air."

Hence, again, if Herod, Herodias and Salome stepped into a large portion of so-called respectable modern life today, would they be abhorred? No, they would not! Would the moderns draw back their skirts and cry "Unclean"? No, they would not! But their crimes would be excused as peccadilloes; their adulteries would be forgotten and their murder of the Baptist would be palliated and condoned as having been provoked by a well-meaning but altogether tactless and uncouth fanatic. Their beauty, their graceful manners, their courtesies of speech, their affluence, their wit of tongue, their brilliancy of repartee, their quickness of perception, their style of dress and entertainment;—their whole atmosphere of refinement, aristocracy and liberal-mindedness would veil the sores of their filthiness; and they would be given an entrée to more than one drawing-room of the land; and, indeed, the host and hostess would be proud to entertain them.

Herod, Herodias and Salome are with us. So too is John:—or rather, a Greater than John. For the Church is with us, with more

than John's love of Christ, hatred of impurity, fearlessness, zeal, eloquence and pity, deep pity, for the sons and daughters of iniquity whom She wishes to make sons and daughters of Christ. And the Church is under the disadvantages that encompassed John. The world is resplendent in gay garments. The Church in Lent is in sack-cloth and ashes. The world lives in a gorgeous court. She abides in a bare-walled cell. The world argues plausibly and appealingly for vice. The Church's arguments for virtue are simple, unadorned and austere. The world has passion, natural taste, the senses and imaginative appeal on her side. The Church can offer us only the approbation of conscience. The world like Herod and Herodias is set in an environment of popularity. The Church like John is distinctly unpopular with devotees of luxury. The world like his persecutors can persecute, stigmatize, ignore, ridicule the Church. The Church like John too frequently goes down to death, obscurity, and helplessness at the hands of enemy-propaganda in papers and magazines.

The chief natural indictment against impurity is, that it destroys love. Love is the

rose and perfume of life. Impurity withers the rose and turns the perfume to a stench. True love and illicit passionate indulgence cannot stand together. Affection, tenderness, exquisite regard; and fleshly excesses cannot co-exist. To be a true lover, one must have something of the angelic about him; he must wear the badge of spirituality; he must breathe the rarefied atmosphere of chastity.—Seek gratification of the body, and you smother affection of the heart. Lust, and you will not love. Pander to carnal appetite, and you will stop with the flesh. Be an animal, and you will never experience the cravings of a man. Refuse to deny the brute in you, and you will not realize the divine in you. Heap up in your soul the ashes of uncleanness, and it will not shine and glow and quicken with the heavenly flame.

If a young man grossly seeks himself, he will not radiantly find his beloved; if his eyes gloat upon her flesh, they will not see the vision of her spirit enshrined in her flesh; and if he absorbs himself in outward contact, he will never know the rapture of embracing her soul.

If husband and wife mutually give love,

physical pleasure will be mutually given them; for, pleasure is the consummation of love. But let them reverse the order of sequence between love and pleasure; let them seek primarily, with deliberate intention, that which ought to be only the spontaneous supplement of love; and sensuality will grow apace, while love will be crowded from the spacious place allotted it on the wedding day.

Again, if husband and wife indulge themselves; then artificially interfere with the consequent natural processes, love cannot long survive. For, such calculating foresight of prevention is entirely foreign to the uncalculating character of love. Moreover, matrimonial love is naturally parental; reproductive of itself; requiring the making of a new image of itself. Deprive it of that, and it languishes; it becomes only half itself; like a full-foliaged but fruitless tree it concentrates its sap selfishly in itself; and selfishness is fatal to love. Finally, artificial childlessness robs married life of the main motive of its institution; divests it of its sacred dignity and changes it from a thing of love into a thing of stark sensuality.

Impurity destroys love. It destroys also the beauty of life;—particularly the moral beauty of womanhood.

Purity is beautiful. It is compared to the lily, whose waxen delicacy and silken whiteness best represent it. "Oh, how beautiful is the chaste generation with glory!" says Holy Writ. Even the infidel unconsciously admires it. Even the roué, steeped in iniquity, grows reverent and weeps at the sight of it. Even Goethe, whose excesses were notorious, wrote of marital purity: "He whom I find attacking the state of marriage has me to reckon with." We all love children, because purity endues them with the charm of a candid transparency. In particular, without purity the grace of womanhood is incomplete. The power of womanhood lies in that. In pagan times, before womanly integrity of life was considered a virtue, women were shorn of their chief loveliness. The immaculateness of the Mother of God has made her the subject of the artists' brush; and from her time to ours Christian women, arrayed in her borrowed garment of snow, have lent an indescribable attractiveness to life. A maid, in fact as well as in name, commands a willingly pro-

fessed respect. A chaste wife is the ornament of home; and mother means so much to a child because, to him, mother is without blemish. Take away innocence from womanhood, and home is divested of its beauty; gentlemanly chivalry loses its motive for respect and one of the chief inspirations of manly chastity perishes. Oh, if men, and especially if women, realized what a glory is falling from their shoulders and from the shoulders of the world when, in the name of liberty of sex, they throw off their inborn sense of shame and affect an unhealthy frankness of sex attitude they would think twice before taking the step. The world is sordid enough without being deprived of its few remnants of moral idealism. Men have sufficient incentives to sin without having the extra incentive of a relaxed code of womanly virtue. The silken cord of female modesty has held back many a man from the brink of turpitude more powerfully than chains of iron. Oh, think twice, and thrice, and a hundred times, you who possess this subtle, feminine forcefulness, before bartering it for an accursed emancipation from restraint. If you do not, he will fall and you will fall deeper than he. Herodias and

Salome enjoyed liberty enough; but they were repulsive in their brazen immodesty. The court of Herod was free enough; but it was an eyesore to God and men. And therefore John, penetrating with his gaze the fair appearances of court pageantry; seeing and scenting the stewed corruption of the underlying reality, held his nostrils in disgust and cried out to that vile free-lover on his throne: "Thou shalt not have thy brother's wife!"

And do not plead the cause of divorce. Divorce is the disgrace of America. Our divorce courts have become the laughing-stock of the world. Other nations point the finger of scorn and laugh in their sleeve at us. The Catholic Church has oftentimes been praised by Protestants for her attitude towards divorce; and she ought to be. For divorce strikes at the law of God, at the welfare of the state, at the permanence and peace of the family; at the sacredness and helplessness of children; at the continence of parents; at the dignity and protection of the wife; at the eternal element of love; at the control of fickleness; at the need of marital adaptability and mutual compromise and at the necessity of slowness, wisdom and cir-

cumspection before the marriage contract is made.

For that reason Christ said: "What God hath joined, let no man put asunder." And the Gospel says: "Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her, and if the wife shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery."—Separation of man and wife for a certain grave cause is specifically allowed by the Gospel; but not annulment of the marriage contract. Hence, even an unhappy mating cannot justify divorce. The parties to the contract made it; they ought to abide by it.—Marital unhappiness is often imaginary, not real.—More or less real unhappiness is essential to life on earth. For, marriage is not a state of bliss but of trial; not a glamorous romance but a stern reality.—Real unhappiness is too often due to mutual faults of husband and wife and can be removed by their good will to amend.—Something short of divorce is a remedy; namely separation. Finally, pleas for divorce on the score of individual claims to happiness leave out of consideration (as they ought not), the infinitely greater pleas of the nation, society,

the family and children against divorce. The individual good must yield to the general good. Divorce, if it were ever allowed, might possibly do good to a few but it would harm the many; for, the many would soon learn the art of manufacturing reasons for divorce.

And pray do not plead the cause of sex-hygiene in the cause of purity. Do not tell me: Teach children sexual matters, and they will be saved from impurity.—For, first, distracting the mind from sexual affairs; not directing it to them, is the best hygiene. Secondly, strength of will to resist is far more important to a child than light of mind to see. Thirdly, we must never forget that a sense of shame is as natural to human beings, as a sense of the beautiful. It is a veil of modesty and ought not to be torn asunder by irreverent hands. One should not explain in a plain and open manner truths which are endued with mystery and delicate reserves. Parents may indicate, suggest, hint at, and, if you will, be quite direct in explaining; but, for a teacher to lay the naked truth of sex upon the dissecting table of a public class room is irreverent, shocking; enlightening, without being

elevating and restraining. Sex-hygiene, as commonly understood, far from being a help is rather a menace to the purity of the young.

Another menace to their purity is the movie show. The possibilities of good, inherent in the cinema are incalculable; but so, also, are the possibilities of evil; and the possibilities of evil are being realized outrageously in America today. Grown persons ought not to judge of the rightness or wrongness of pictures by their own feeling of immunity from harm. For, youth is more susceptible of erotic impressions than maturity. It is nice to wish that we could see all things without being unduly impressed, but the fact is that we inherit the stigma of original sin, whose effect is an habitual instigation to unlawful indulgence. Platonic impassiveness, especially in the young, is a fiction, not a reality. The Greeks of old have frequently been praised for their artistic contemplation and portrayal of the human form; as if, forsooth, the beauty of their imaginings were not allied to the passions of their flesh. But those who are familiar with ancient history know that the idea of a classic Greek is synony-

mous with the idea of an unnatural degenerate. The Greeks were beautiful in art but vile in life. We have been very careful of the morality of our boys in the European war; but we have been quite careless in regard to grave dangers to their morality on the screen.

Finally the dope habit which disarms all powers of resistance to evil and enlivens the imagination with graphic seductiveness is becoming a grave danger among us. "Snow-parties," to which young women and young men carry along with them the means of indulging in a narcotic debauch, occur. Would you be surprised to be told that there are at present cliques of fashionable people in our own city of Detroit who have read "The Opium Eater" and are following in the footsteps of De Quincey? Truly Herod, Herodias, Salome and their sensuous gang are not dead!

Oh, let us not become a decadent race! Before the war we had grown fat, pursy, scant of breath with over-feeding, over-drinking, over-sleeping and the rest. The war put iron into our blood. Let us not now forget our military heroism nor revert to our former insipidity and decay. God

smote us with His rod, lest we should forget Him. We awoke. If we sleep again and wallow in the bad dream of sensuality, the Lord in His anger may depart from us and leave us in that sleep of death.

Had you been in Herod's court, would you not have gloried in standing at the side of John, backing him and even enduring chains and death with him heroically in the cause of decency? You can do that today; for John preaches now in spirit, as he did then in the flesh. Now, as then, most men are deaf to his eloquence; but a few have ears. Be you of the few! Fall down at his feet; repent and resolve to live chastely henceforth if you have failed in the past. Sorrow will heal you like ointment in a wound. Tears will wash you clean. The flame of love for John and for the dear Master whom he represents will lick up all impurities. "An humble and contrite heart, oh, Lord, Thou wilt not despise!"—And the Baptist will place his unblemished hand upon your head and a corner of his garment of austerity upon your shoulder; and your heart will sing, when, looking dearly down at you, he says: "Arise, go forth from this unholy

court into the clean, fresh atmosphere of an innocent life. In the name of Him who sent me I say: Arise, your sins are forgiven you; go, and sin no more."

DIVES AND LAZARUS

St. Luke, ch. 16, vs. 19–31.

"There was a certain rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen; and feasted sumptuously every day. And there was a certain beggar, named Lazarus, who lay at his gate, full of sores, desiring to be filled with crumbs that fell from the rich man's table, and no one did give him; moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. And it came to pass that the beggar died and was carried by Angels into Abraham's bosom. And the rich man also died; and he was buried in hell. And lifting up his eyes when he was in torments, he saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said: Father Abraham, have mercy upon me and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water to cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. And Abraham said to him: Son, remember that thou didst receive good things in thy life-time, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and thou art tormented. And besides all this, between us and you there is fixed a great chaos; so that they who would pass from hence to you, cannot, nor from thence come hither. And he said: Then, father, I beseech thee that thou wouldst send him to my father's house, for I have five brethren, that he may testify unto them lest they also come into this place of torments. And Abraham said to him: They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. But he said: No, Father Abraham, but if one went to them from the dead they will do penance. And he said to him: If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they believe if one rise again from the dead."

THE MONOPOLY OF WEALTH

"There was a certain rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen; and feasted sumptuously every day." Gold, jewels, mansions, theaters, regal furniture, hangings of velvet and silk, works of art, flattering companions, yachts, horses, chariots, music, dancing, banquets, flowers and wines;—these were the factors of his life.

"And there was a certain beggar, named Lazarus, who lay at his gate, full of sores, desiring to be filled with the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table; and no one did give him; moreover the dogs came and licked his sores." Hunger and thirst, cold and heat, poor clothes, empty pockets, sickness and sores, isolation from companionship, homelessness, exposure to ridicule, contempt and neglect;—these were the factors of *his* life.

That contrast between the two was a disgrace; an enormous wrong; a sin against nature and religion;—a crime crying to heaven for vengeance. It was a disgrace

that one man should live like a god and that the other should live like a brute; that one should feast and the other fast; that one should be clothed in purple and fine linen and the other in dirty rags; that the one should lie on a couch of down and the other on the ground at his gates; that the one should be blanketed cozily on winter nights and the other shiver in the cold; that the one should luxuriate in the shade on summer afternoons and the other welter in the heat; that the one should be fawned upon by parasites and the other, taken liberties with by scavenger dogs;—all that was a shame and a crime. Christ thought it so; and so ought we.

It was a crime against nature. For all men are equal by nature; and surely some evidence of their natural equality ought to be shown in the world. Men are unequal in talents, manners, personal appearance, education, social standing and success; but they are equal in the possession of fundamental natural attributes. They all have reason, liberty, personality, and a human heart with the same loves, hopes, ambitions; with the same capacity for happiness, with the same sort of bodies and souls. And, I repeat,

contrasts between them, such as that between Dives and Lazarus; contrasts which would lead one to believe that they belong to different species of beings, are outrages against nature, and must therefore be abolished. The points of natural equality between man and man are more important than the points of difference; and therefore in the material environment of their lives men ought rather to *approach* a level of equality than to be separated by very great differences. For, human nature, which all share alike, which Dives and Lazarus shared alike, is the grandest thing in creation, short of the angels and the grace of God. The great Poet exclaims: "Oh, what a piece of work is man! How noble in reason, how infinite in faculty, in motion how express and admirable, in action how like an angel, in apprehension how like a god; the glory of the world, the paragon of animals!" And indeed all great poets, when writing at their best, write of man; of the natural, not the artificial man;—of his intellect, his deeds, his loves, aspirations, exultations and titanic griefs. If they sing of mansions or of hovels, it is because man dwells in them; if of fields, because man treads them; if of

oceans, because man sails them; if of great enterprises, it is because these are initiated by man. And man is worthy of their songs; for what scale can measure the height of his ambitions? What plummet can sound the depths of his love? What horizon can enclose the sweep of his gaze? "The good and the beautiful" he longs for; and even when he sins, he sins because he has been deceived by sin under the appearance of "the good" and "the beautiful"; and after he has sinned he lashes himself with remorse and by penance tries to be a man again.

Behold, then, men and women before you in their natural elements; and tell me, is not one ounce of essential manhood and womanhood better than a thousand pounds of the unessentials of life? Is it not more important to be a real woman than a mere lady; to be a genuine man than a mere gentleman? Is not human nature a better thing than worldly standing? Are not the fundamental factors in which all men are alike of greater import than the more or less superficial factors in which they differ? And if this is so, is it not an outrage and a crime that men, equal in nature, equal in mind, heart, liberty and feeling, should be so hor-

ribly unequal in the material apportionments of life? That Dives should be clothed in purple and fine linen and feast sumptuously every day and that Lazarus should lie at his gate, starving, repulsive with sores, boon companions of stray dogs? That the whole tribe of profiteers should live in luxury while thousands of their equals are living in want?—On this point I am with the socialists. Artificial industrial life has created an economic disparity between man and man which neither God nor nature intended should be. Clever manipulation of the supplies, afforded by mother nature to all her children, has concentrated them in the possession of a few. Cunning dishonesty and shrewd selfishness have monopolized wealth.

God forbid that I should say that all rich men are open to blame or that all poor men are blameless! No, natural ability, industry, opportunity and thrift have fairly placed some men on top; while laziness, inefficiency, extravagance and hard luck have kept other men down. I speak not of these. But there are those, and thousands of them, to whom my words apply. And they, the profiteers, are the progenitors of the brood of Bolsheviki, I. W. W., Socialists and

Anarchists. We see the world now under the threat of fire and sword. Profiteers are responsible; their selfishness, their greed, their adoration of the golden calf, their unscrupulous cleverness. And if they are tumbled from their place they will be getting their deserts. But the greatest curse of the situation is, that decent men are liable to share in their downfall. The storm which they conjured up may overwhelm us all. Profiteers and Bolsheviki will fight, and the upright citizen will feel the blows. It does not pay, therefore, for honest citizens to remain passive in this predicament; but we ought to exercise every bit of our indignant and self-interested energy to make money-grabbers stop their game of wholesale theft before it is too late. Force Dives to step out of his mansion and to invite Lazarus to a place of decency; force him to eat less so that Lazarus may eat more; to reduce his wardrobe so that nakedness may be clothed; to melt a bit of his silver plate so that Lazarus may have a bit of silver with which to fill his plate; force him to requisition his high-priced physician less for the cure of his gout so that the hungry man's feebleness may be ministered to; force him

to laugh less that Lazarus may weep less; to sing less that Lazarus may groan less. We ought to force Dives to do this because, though Lazarus is poor, ignorant and suffering, he is a man; and "a man's a man for a' that"; and though Dives is rich, intelligent, cultivated and in honor, he is no more than a man for a' that; and between man and man such terribly unmanly differences ought not to be.

Finally, if we do not intervene we have reason to fear that the modern Lazarus, less patient than the Original of Holy Writ, will intervene himself; will rise in his wrath, kill, burn and debauch; enter the mansion of aristocracy; strip Dives of his purple, strip himself of his rags and make an exchange; sit at table and elbow the master from his place; eat, drink and carouse; stagger to his feet, lord it over all and then kick the master unceremoniously across his own threshold to a corner at his own gate, to become a new companion for dogs, a new pleader for crumbs. The new Lazarus will do this to the new Dives and what is worse, he will do it to us!

But, you may say: This is an exaggeration; there is no such thing as a Dives and

Lazarus in modern life.—This is not an exaggeration. I tell you the plain truth and I give my proofs: The Department of Health of New York City discovered in December 1917 that in the City of New York at that time there were 216,000 children who were seriously undernourished and 611,000 children who were only in a passable condition, on the borderline. The City Club of Milwaukee found out that forty per cent of the children of that city, under working age, were not provided with a wholesome living on account of their parents' inadequate income. From the U. S. Immigration Commission, the Federal Children's Bureau and official reports of the States of Massachusetts, Ohio and California we learn that between twenty-five and fifty per cent of the married men of the United States earn too little to provide for their families. Forty-three per cent of native born heads of families, sixty-six per cent of foreign born heads of families in 1908 received less than $750 a year. Salaries have increased since then but all admit that the cost of living has increased still more. In 1916 in Baltimore, Waterbury, Akron and Manchester thirty-nine per cent of the fathers of families

earned less than $650 a year. According to a study of the industrial conditions of Ohio, made in 1915, half of the factory and saleswomen, and one-third of the stenographers and clerks are earning less than sufficient to maintain health and decency. Hundreds of millions of dollars in wages are lost through preventable sickness contracted in industrial life. Tens of thousands of young mothers are widowed each year through preventable industrial accidents. A government survey conducted in Washington, D. C., in 1916 showed that the lowest expenditure for food per man was forty cents a day; and that two-thirds of the two thousand representative families examined, spent less than forty cents a day for food for each man. The amount which the incomes of the poor of the United States were short of the amounts that would make normal living possible was about 1.5 billion dollars a year in 1910. The Bankers Trust Co. of New York City estimates that ten million poor families of the U. S. have average incomes of only $700 a year, while ten thousand rich families have average yearly incomes of $270,000. Wilford King estimates that in 1910 the richest two per cent of the families

of the U. S. received as much as the poorest forty per cent. Every study of family budgets finds that in families with small incomes the great bulk of the money goes for food, rent, clothing, while very little is spent for recreation, health, liquor, and other luxuries. The Rev. Dr. Ryan, summing up his conclusion drawn from these and many other similar facts, says that more than sixty per cent of the men working in cities of the U. S. would need to have their wages raised if they are to receive a living wage.

If there were not an abundance of supplies to go around, the crime of poverty would not be so crying. But there is sufficient for all. The total income of the U. S. now, according to the Bankers Trust Co. of New York City, is fifty billion dollars a year; $2,200 a year per family. This fact does not prove that each family ought to receive $2,200 a year but it does prove that there is no excuse, on the plea of insufficiency, for giving any hard-working man less than a living wage. The abundant benefits of Nature were given to man for his subsistence; but they do not get to their destination in right proportions. The sun shines for all men, yet many men in tene-

ments and hovels seldom see it; the air breathes for all men, yet multitudes are half-stifled in animal housing; the earth with its grass, trees, iridescent flowers and birds, with its rivers and lakes, smiles for all; yet the children of the dust and ashes would think that you were telling them an impossible fairy-tale if you told them of the joyous beauty of the earth. Wheat-fields cover the Continent with an overcoat of gold; yet tens of thousands are singing "The Song of the Shirt": "Oh God, that bread should be so dear, and human flesh so cheap!" Fruit trees are bending and breaking beneath their weight of luscious crimson and gold; yet few palates are refreshed with their juicy exuberance. Herds of cattle are prolific of hides, flocks of sheep are prolific of wool; yet men innumerable go cold. The supplies are there; but they do not get fairly to all of those for whom they were intended by nature and God. Wholesale, criminal destruction of the fruits of the earth by some capitalists who wish to keep up the prices of commodities; cornering of supplies, refusal to ship goods to markets, monopoly price-fixing:—these and other arbitrary, artificial regulations of industrial

life principally account for the fact of Dives and Lazarus in the modern world.

Up to the present we have been considering Dives and Lazarus. But there is another Figure in this tremendous scene;—the Figure of Christ. Let us turn our eyes toward Him; let us see what sort of Person He is, what He says and how He deals with Dives and Lazarus.

Christ was a poor man who could have been rich. He could have identified Himself with the aristocracy of Rome, the imperial mistress of the world. He could have been born in a gorgeous mansion on one of the seven hills. He could have consorted with senators, poets, orators and the scions of patrician families. He could have gone down to the market-place, mounted the rostrum and poured out a golden flood of eloquence upon the multitude about His Father's kingdom; or at the head of armies, with banners flapping, to the sound of martial brass, with the golden eagles of Rome glittering in the sun above His head, He could have gone forth to Gaul, Germany and Britain, carrying the good news of salvation to the ends of the earth. All this Christ could have done. But the most astounding

fact of history is that He didn't. For He was born in a stable and raised in a cottage; in His public life He cast His lot with the plebeians of a despised province of the Orient, with men rough-hewn in feature and form. He preached to them, fed them, wept with them, wearied Himself for them; His garments were rough; His food was plain; and many a time at night, after working all day long, He had to retire to the hill-tops to take His rest on the hard ground in the open air, with the sky for the ceiling of His room, with the stars of heaven as candle-lights to light Him to rest, with a stream for drink and a bush or vine or tree to breakfast from. And after this hard life He died on the cross in a rag and was buried in a tomb that was not His own. This is what Christ did. And if Christ were in Detroit today (if we can judge at all what He would do by what He did), He would be among the poor of the city, not among the rich; living in a modest home, not in a palace; eating plain meals, not feasting at banquet-boards; working, not luxuriating in ease. By choice He would do this, in order that He might give comfort, encouragement, patience and joy to the poor by His example and companion-

ship. He would rather be Lazarus lying at the rich man's door craving crumbs than Dives, seated within amid music, lights, the fragrance of flowers and aristocratic company; feasting sumptuously, conversing brilliantly and arrayed in fine linen and silk. This is what Christ taught by example in regard to poverty and wealth. And if all Christians in name were also Christians in deed they would find inspiration in Him for being poor with pride, and being rich with fear.

Christ stands between Dives and Lazarus. And what does He say to Dives? You can guess what He says. For if *you* are wrought up at the contrast between Dives and Lazarus, judge what must have been the feelings and words of Christ. I see Him walking indignantly toward the portico of that palatial home. He crosses the threshold and breaks into the midst of the festive gathering, unannounced. The guests look up at Him in surprise and consternation; the music ceases; and Dives sits in his place, stricken with fear. And well he may! For before him flames the wrath of the Son of God. His eyes are blazing and His lips are hot with eloquence: "Oh thou hard-hearted

man of wealth! Yonder, Lazarus lies starving at thy gates; and thou sittest here in luxury! Wherefore, I say to thee, hereafter Lazarus will rest in the bosom of Abraham and thou wilt be buried in hell. A drop of water will not be given thee and thy sufferings will never end! Now thou art clothed in purple and fine linen; hereafter thou wilt be arrayed in flames; now thou laughest; then thou wilt weep: now thy ears are charmed with sweet sounds; then they will be assailed with oaths: now thou regalest thy palate with viands; then thy bread will be spread with ashes and thy cup will be filled with tears."

Christ is meek but Christ is terrible. Christ is the Lamb of God but Christ is the Lion of Juda. His lips sometimes smile but His eyes sometimes flash. He pities the unfortunate but He hates the oppressor.—Dives sits in silent agony. Should he repent Christ would take him to His breast. But repentance is far from his heart; and Christ, turning, leaves him and makes His way to Lazarus at the gate.

Christ makes His way to Lazarus and comforts him, keeps him company, assures him of His constant protection and promises

that he will live in a mansion in the Kingdom of God, where, arrayed in fine linen and purple, he will feast sumptuously forever on spiritual delights. And poor Lazarus smiles and his heart is glad.

In imitation of the Master's attitude toward Dives and Lazarus, I would address the rich and poor of today. To the rich I would say: You who have wealth, see to it, I beseech you, that if there be any element of Dives' character in your heart, you remove it immediately lest you share his fate. You cannot afford to trifle with Christ's poor. The poor are the apple of His eye. But if you are just and generous to them be comforted; for on the last day of the world He will say to you: "Come, ye blessed of My Father, and possess the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world. For when I was hungry you gave Me to eat, when I was thirsty you gave Me to drink, when I was naked you clothed Me, when I was sick you visited Me. For when you did this thing to the least of My servants, you did it unto Me."

And that you may use your wealth aright, remember that getting rich is not "the be all and end all" of life; that the immoderate

love of money is the root of all evil; that it is harder for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God than for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle; that you hold your wealth not for your own exclusive advantage but also as God's almoner for the poor. Remember that your greater opportunities place greater obligations and responsibilities upon your back; that the poor are your equals in the Kingdom of God and ought not to be treated as enemies; that generosity rather than bare justice ought to characterize your dealings with them; that if you resolve only to be fair, you will not be fair; that you must aim above the bull's eye, to hit it; that you must be willing to do more than enough, so as to do enough; finally, that the contentment of a community is infinitely more important than any man's personal enrichment; that the promotion of community contentment is an object worthy of the best ambition of the best of us; of course it requires a sacrifice; but it is worth the sacrifice.

Moreover, Lazarus has a right to a living wage; to the necessities, comforts and some of the luxuries of life. He has a right to an education because without it he can hardly

succeed in life and because a fair amount of knowledge, considered even as a luxury, is his due. · He has a right to amusements; for he is not a machine, destined exclusively for work, but a man with a God-given capacity for enjoyment: besides, work of high quality is impossible without recreation. He has a right to a home of his own and to the wage necessary to obtain it; for, life without a home is a travesty on life. Lazarus has a right to this moderate degree of earthly happiness because a good Providence intends men to have a moderate degree of such happiness. At His bidding Mother Nature with profuse generosity pours from her teeming sides exuberant supplies for all men. Last, not least, Lazarus, besides being your equal in nature, is your equal in the commonwealth of Christianity. For the Savior of the world died for him as well as for you; he and you are equal children of Our Father in heaven; both of you are equally destined for blessings after death: and it is not right that equals in this sublime spiritual brotherhood should illustrate in their earthly careers the basest kind of inequality; that one of you should wear the

trappings of excessive wealth and the other should have stamped upon his free brow the stigma of economic slavery.

To the poor I would say: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven;"—hereafter; and also here, in the form of peace, good conscience, friendship with God and with their fellow-men: in the form of freedom from the sordid lust of gold and from that vulgar tone of life which the possession of gold too frequently imparts.

Remember that moderate means are safer and more productive of happiness than great wealth, and that, while the poor carry the burden of want, the rich carry the equally heavy burden of wealth,—the burden of nerve-racking energy in acquiring it, of worry in managing it, of fear of losing it and of the certainty of being parted from it on the last day of their life. Remember that the laborer's life is dignified, that work is noble, more refining, more manly than luxurious ease; that sweat is honorable, that calloused hands are things to be proud of and that the wielding of axe, hammer and pick for the support of wife and children is

as worthy of a man as the wielding of pen or sword or artist's brush or judge's gavel or surgeon's knife or marshal's staff.

Moreover you may strive to become wealthy by every fair means at your disposal. Trade-unionism; partial governmental regulation of wages and prices; profit-sharing; governmental regulation of trusts and publicity in regard to their methods of operation; a graduated income tax; accident and health-insurance, unemployment-insurance, mothers' pensions and old age pensions;—these and other like means of bettering the conditions of the poor lie within the sphere of rectitude; and you may employ them to ameliorate your lot.

But have nothing to do with unjust methods of becoming rich. Therefore avoid the brood of Bolsheviki, I. W. W. and Socialists who are bringing chaos into the world. The profiteer is bad; the radical socialist is as bad, if not worse. The disease of poverty in the world is lamentable; but the cure of socialism is worse than the disease. And if every decent man, perforce, grows eloquent against profiteers he must likewise vent his wrath upon radical laborers. For radical laborers are men of perpetual unrest, storm-

centers of discontent, avowed believers in the necessity of class-enmity, denouncers of the right of private property, propagandists of the false theory that the whole exchange value of things in industrial life is derived from labor; believers in the industrial equality of all men; protagonists for governmental ownership of all capital and, by implication, destroyers of personal initiative, ambition and energy. They are men (many of them at least, as we see in the case of the Bolsheviki), who are evidently opposed to all government, who revel in slaughter, who elaborate their plans and spread their inflammatory doctrine secretly, underhandedly, as they are now doing in Detroit; men who do not wish to approximate the wealthy nor even to equal them but wish to pauperize them that they may enrich themselves; men who are battening on the carcass of Russia and picking her bones and would like to feast on the juicy flesh of America. They are men who, like the I. W. W., tried to block our war, played into the hands of Germany and embarrassed the President;—men of no patriotism and no religion. They are men who frequently have been abusing instead of using their right to strike; who

enter unions which is right, but prevent non-union men from working which is wrong; who oftentimes deliberately limit their output of energy instead of working industriously, even in cases where wages are adequate. They are men who are not reasonable but greedy; not fair but exorbitant; who want, not all they need and deserve but all they can get; who grow in selfishness as the employer grows in generosity; and who, considering each concession as a sign of weakness, try to brow-beat and bully him for more and more.

Now all this is wrong. It is wrong to say that the whole exchange-value of articles in industrial life is derived from labor and that the only just title of possession is labor, spent upon things one possesses. For, such things have a use-value, an inherent value of their own which evidently influences their exchange value; e. g., the inherent value of diamonds and gold in the rough. Also, the scarcity of things, the demand for them, the novelty of them bear upon their exchange-value. Finally, squatters' occupancy can give one a title to land. The squatter obtains a right to the land he fairly occupies because Nature may be supposed to give her

benefits on the principle: "First come, first served." He has a right to the capital derived from land and to rent from the land and to interest on the capital, even though he do no labor; and he has the right of handing on these possessions to his descendants. Yes, capital has its rights as well as labor; and we must respect them as well as the rights of labor.

The Bolsheviki wish to place the poor man where the rich man was, and the rich man where the poor man was. This evidently is wrong. Socialists wish to place rich and poor on a dead level of industrial equality. This also evidently is wrong. Profiteers wish to keep rich and poor in their present relative positions. This also is wrong. But I wish to lessen the inhuman distance between the very rich and the very poor. I wish to narrow the wide chasm between the two extremes of society so that the extremely rich shall have less, and the extremely poor shall have more. In other words, I do not wish Dives to feast sumptuously, and you, Lazarus, to beg for crumbs. Nor do I wish you to feast sumptuously while Dives begs for crumbs. Nor do I wish you and him to dine on identical diet.

But I wish Dives' diet to be less sumptuous and yours to be less plain.

But, Brethren, you may object to me: All that you say is true. But you are credulous if you think the world will listen to your Christian means of economic reform.—Yes, I am aware of the world's callousness to the teaching and example of the Lord. One of the paradoxes of Christianity is the obliviousness of most so-called Christians with regard to Christ. Christ stands before men to show them how to live and few consider Him. Isaias said of Him: "A child is given to us, the Prince of Peace." But, to judge by appearances, the majority of men will not be led by the Child nor accept His peace. They are sufficient unto themselves. They can play the game of life without His direction. He will do for pietists but not for practical men of the world. He is relegated to the Church. He has little place in the office, the workshop and society. He will do for the moment of death but not for the busy years of life. The thought of Him is to be an occasional distraction from business, a pleasant bit of spiritual sentiment, a casual ethereal indulgence, a rare luxury, like the reading of poetry or the con-

templation of the stars; like being impressed by the ocean or awed by a mountain or charmed by a strain of music or regaled by the fragrance of a flower! But tell the generality of men that the spirit of Christ is to permeate the flesh and blood, the bone, sinew and nerves of their daily lives in the world, and they will wonder. Tell them that Christ is to be with them when they make love and when they make war; when they dance and when they fight; when they work and when they rest; at their feasts as well as at their fasts, and they will wonder. They forget that Christ went through the phases of a human life to show them how to live. Oh! if Christ were a vivid reality to us how little hardness toward labor there would be among employers. How little sullen violence among laborers! How little ill-feeling in the home! How little frivolous indulgence among the rich! How little complaining among the poor! If Christ's spirit had been abroad the European war would not have occurred. But because men were too earthly and selfish; readier to make claims than to make concessions; fonder of rights than of charity; more willing to take than to give, therefore we see what we see!

Christ is the Teacher and Leader of men; and if they will not enjoy His peace they must endure their own wars, if they will not follow Him to heaven they must choose the alternative of hell. This is the only alternative. Let us not be of those who are unwilling to listen to, and follow, Christ.

Do not say: What can we, a handful, do?—For, Brethren, always and everywhere it is the few men, the few women that count in life. You, a few, can do wonders by yourselves if you have the courage. Great undertakings begin from the bottom and work upward; from the few men and women below. What is needed in life is not a great number of men but a few great men; and your greatness depends upon your grit; you will probably be as great as you will to be. Your individual energy moreover will set others afire. They will not be able to resist the magnetism of your example. Enthusiasm is contagious. Newman says well: "Moses was one, Elias was one, David was one, Leo was one, Athanasius was one. Grace ever works by the few. It is the keen vision, the intense conviction, the indomitable resolve of the few. It is the blood of the martyr, it is the

prayer of the saint, it is the heroic deed, it is the momentary crisis, it is the concentrated energy of a look or a word which is the instrument of Heaven." Each one of you is a dynamo in himself. You will become a dynamic force, setting this city aglow with Christian enthusiasm if you steep your soul in energy, courage, resourcefulness, initiative, confidence.

Therefore, let us all do our best! And we may trust that the threatening clouds of Bolshevism will break and that a better day will dawn;— the day of lesser economic contrast; the day of greater economic proximity between rich and poor, between capital and labor, between Dives and Lazarus.

JESUS AT THE WEDDING-FEAST

St. John, ch. 2, vs. 1–11.

"And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there. And Jesus also was invited, and his disciples, to the marriage. And the wine failing, the mother of Jesus saith to him: They have no wine. And Jesus saith to her: Woman, what is that to Me and to thee; my time is not yet come. His mother saith to the waiters: Whatsoever He shall say to you, do ye. Now there were set there six water-pots of stone, according to the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three measures apiece. Jesus saith to them: Fill the water-pots with water. And they filled them up to the brim. And Jesus saith to them: Draw out now and carry to the chief-steward of the feast; and they carried it. And when the chief-steward had tasted the water made wine, and knew not whence it was, but the waiters knew who had drawn the water, the chief-steward calleth the bride-groom and saith to him: Every man at first setteth forth good wine, and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse. But thou hast kept the good wine until now. This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee; and manifested his glory and his disciples believed in him."

SAFEGUARDS OF MARRIAGE

Jesus attends the wedding-feast of Cana to show His esteem for marriage and to convey the lesson that He and His spirit ought to be present at marriages in their festive incipiency and continuation through life. Would that all men and women had the respect for marriage which He had and that they would insure the joys of their married life by making Him a party to it!

For human love, whose consummation is marriage, is the most precious thing in nature, under God; worth preserving and increasing at almost any cost. Love is an impulse, a tendency, an energy, an activity which has to do with union. The activity of love is only in the passions or only in the will or in both. The passions are irresponsible, spontaneous, violent activities, fed by the imagination and the five senses of the flesh; the object toward which they tend being either sensuous or spiritual in a sensuous disguise. The will is a free agency which, under the judicial light of the mind, can

either choose or refuse to unite itself to the things which lie within its sphere of action. The object of love is the beautiful and good. Love starts in the passions and ceases with the ceasing of their activity; or it starts in the passions and is then taken up by the will which can freely love on on account of some permanent goodness and beauty mentally perceived, even after the passions have cooled and the senses have ceased to be delighted with an attractive thing and indeed even after the thing itself has lost sensuous comeliness; or, finally, love starts in the will without emotion and afterwards develops into a passion of the heart. The union of love has either already been attained or it is yet to be attained. In the latter case, difficulties either are or are not in the way of attainment. If union with the beloved has not yet been attained and if no obstacles intervene, love is called *desire*. If obstacles are in the way and if they are, or appear to be, surmountable, love is called *hope;* otherwise love is called *despair*. If the union has been attained, love is called *joy*. The opposite of love is *hate*. The opposite of desire is *aversion*. The opposite of hope is *fear*. The opposite of despair is *courage*. The

opposite of joy is either *sadness* or *anger;* sadness in case the bereft one yields to his deprivation; anger in case he resents it.

Love in its diverse forms, and hatred with its variations;—these, Brethren, are the titanic, elemental forces which have rocked the world with their tremendous quakes from the beginning of time; which, in their sinister forms, were let loose by original sin to lay waste the world like devouring beasts instead of making the world a paradise; which are at the bottom of all the romances, tragedies and wars of life; which raise some men to the level of the divine and sink other men to the level of the beast; which cause the most exquisite delight and the most anguishing pain; which enlarge the heart or bruise it; which fill the eyes with radiance or with tears; which spiritualize the body or carnalize the soul; which make homes or break homes; which build up states to gigantic proportions or tumble them to ruins; which send some souls whirling to heaven and others hurtling to hell.

The true lover has a double end in view; advantage to self and advantage to the other. For every genuine lover, either consciously or unconsciously, seeks his own

good and the good of his beloved. He seeks his own good because self-seeking in one form or another is a law of human nature; the heart of man is made that way; it is made to pursue the good and beautiful, because the quest and acquisition of goodness and beauty delight and perfect it.—He seeks the good of his beloved; he wishes that her personal excellence should be a delight to her, and also that whatever excellence he himself may possess, may be hers, may be given her and redound to her greater happiness; and he does so because love is naturally expansive; it tends to communicate itself, it is strangled by self-concentration, it grows with giving; like a fire, it tends to warm whatever comes into its sphere; it consumes itself, that another may be warm and live.

Selfishness comes from adverting to, emphasizing, and exclusively considering the self-element of love. Irrational altruism comes from neglecting the just claims of self; from exalting the other's claims out of all proportion to their deserts. A selfish lover (if such a thing be possible) wishes to receive without giving; to receive the delight of possession without giving to another

a like delight. An irrationally altruistic lover (for instance, a fine girl who throws herself away upon a scoundrel), wishes to give him the pleasure of possessing her, without enjoying the pleasure of a worthy possession in return. The normal lover wishes to give and to receive delight.

Hence, Brethren, the great paradox of love; namely, its embodiment of two opposites; the opposites of joy and pain. For all love is a rose with a thorn. He who regales himself with the fragrance of the rose must feel the pricking of the thorn. He who endures the sting of the thorn may hope to scent the rose. Pain has never been dissociated from true love; hence the phrase "the pain of love." Romance, even at the very moment of exulting on the heights, trembles at the chasms of gaping possibilities. The thrill of the wedding day has its accompanying ache. On that day much is being received but much is given up. A new home looms; but the dear old home; the home of mother, childhood and delightful irresponsibility is vanishing. The old secure life is being divorced; a new life, unknown, strange, fraught with all sorts of possibilities has been espoused. Hence the strange tears,

sighs and shrinkings of the bridal day. And through the whole of wedded life love is not a mere indulgence, not merely a comfort and luxury; (for comfort and luxury are mediocre things; and love is not a thing of mediocrity); but it is a thrill, part rapture, part pang; it is a heart with a dart in it; a flame that warms, but burns; that pleases, but hurts. For love consists in giving as well as in receiving; and giving means sacrifice. Wherefore, all men and women crossing the threshold of marriage may and ought to anticipate the delight of love; but, must also ponder well in their heart of heart the pain of love.

I told you that love can be in the passions without being in the will: and the great misery of life is, that too many, conceiving a passion for each other, allow it to glow and grow to its climax and then to sink to grey cold embers, without solidifying it into a rational, constant affection of the will. Thus when the nuptial flame flickers and dies, both of the unhappy pair sit at the empty fire-place of each other's heart, waiting, waiting for the rekindling which oftentimes never occurs. Meanwhile the winds of misfortune and hardship make their so-

called home unbearable. But if on the other hand after the first blush and thrill of legitimate passion they deliberately resolve in their wills to accept its lead and to adopt as their own that spontaneous, blind movement of the heart, love is begotten in the will; a love capable of remaining intact and growing despite the fluctuations of passionate sentiment.

This love of the will is the only love worth while. It is constant, poised, rational and above the little troubles of life. For it is in the soul, not in the flesh; it is not our master, we master it; it does not depend upon the glowing, fragrant, delectable representations of sense; facial beauty and grace of form are not its only food; these can fade and deteriorate but it remains; it is not perturbed by the lover's disillusionment from romantic idealism and dreamy unreality; by his rude awakening to the prosaic plainness of things; for his mind has perceived the truth, beauty and goodness of his beloved's soul; his will has fixed upon that like a vise and holds it in an unbreakable embrace. This is true love, as distinguished from mere sentiment, flabby sentimentality, nauseous gush, inconstant emotion, self-gratifying

passion, romantic absurdity. I do not say it is wholly spiritual. It is helped by passion and helps it. Physical beauty is its object, as well as spiritual. Eyes, ears and imagination minister to it, as well as mind. It has also upon it the splendor of romance, the charm of dreams, the touch of idealism. No! It is not an austere, disembodied activity of the soul. But while the senses and physical beauty influence it, nevertheless in the last analysis it is superior to them and lives on triumphant even though her cheeks lose their glow and her eyes their splendor and her lips their crimson and her skin its snow and her hair its luxuriance; and her whole body its charm, provided her soul still stands erect and unhurt amid the ruin of its fleshly house; still stands, to magnetize, to hold fast the will of her beloved and to justify to his reason his willing slavery.

A sense of humor must go hand in hand with love if love is not to perish. The object of love is the good and beautiful; the object of humor is the unbeautiful, the incongruous, the absurd. Not all things are good and beautiful and no one thing in creation is perfectly so. A concrete intermingling of beautiful qualities and unlovely

traits is the ordinary reality of life. But the lover in his first rush of impassioned devotion insists that such is not the case; insists that his particular beloved is without flaw. If she has faults he blinds himself to them; if she lacks amiability, why, he weaves amiability for her out of the iridescent gossamer of his own creative imagination and heart; arrays her in it and is content. But subjective loveliness cannot stand the test of time; it must gradually sink to its real proportions. What then? Will love shrink with it? Yes, unless common-sense humor is at the side of love. But if a lover be also a humorist, when the charm of beauty fails him he will discover the charm of absurdity; —in particular the absurdity of his own overwrought idealism; and he will know how to laugh as well as he knew how to sigh. Now, laughter is a precious thing; for it sustains and increases joy; and joy saves love. Such a man, when the skyey mansion of his dreams dissolves, will not brood in melancholy discontent but will thank God with a chuckle that he still has the good old earth to stand upon and a little home to live in and a very human wife to put up with. He is a humorous man; and a humor-

ous man picks the pearl of happiness even out of an oyster shell, and the diamond of happiness even out of blue clay, and the gold of happiness even out of sand; and the honey of happiness even out of the rude hollow of a gnarled and ancient tree.

And think not that I plead for excessive realism in life. No, I would not tear down the mansion of romance. Some would make life all prose. Life has its poetry. Some would chain lovers' feet to earth. No, lovers have wings. Some would have them deal only with facts. No, they have fancies, which as well as facts are from God. Some would have the chamber of their life lighted only by the plain white light of day, let in to them through the transparent window of common sense. But lovers are encompassed by the casements of imagination and heart, which like stained-glass windows of gorgeous hues, transform the light of plain reality and bathe the pair in effulgent splendor. The fault lies in extremes; in too much realism, in too much idealism. The right thing is the combination of both. Therefore never look at the iridescence of the rainbow without remembering that it is common water. But keep on looking at it. And when you

see plain water remember that out of it rainbows are made. Never admire the sparkle of a diamond without remembering that it is charcoal. But keep on admiring it. And when you see charcoal recall its identity with diamonds. Never contemplate the waxen delicacy and silken whiteness of a lily without the thought that it sprang from the dark, dank earth. But keep on contemplating it. And when you look at the earth remember that from it the lily sprang. Never gaze at your heroine and hero without keeping in mind that they are no more than woman, no more than man. But keep on seeing the heroic in them (and if they seem to lack that quality in reality, draw on your imagination for material). But if you consider them in their plain manhood and womanhood, remind yourself that in the midst of the prosaic activities of their lives heroic characteristics develop. Do this; and you will learn the art of building a kitchen next door to your palace of dreams; you will learn to cook well as well as to look well; to wear an apron as well as a gown. You will come to understand that the ordinary comforts of life minister wonderfully to the ex-

traordinary accomplishments of life; that a good meal, a warm fire, a neat home are the earthly commonplaces in which music, painting, literature and love are implanted; from which they spring and from which they draw sustenance to produce their crimsoned, golden fruit. All this is true; and therefore never taste the joys of love without keeping an eye upon the plain realities of love. Never move among the plain realities of love without thinking of the joys of love. Never contemplate the beauty of life without a thought for its incongruities. Never laugh at its incongruities without a firm conviction of its manifold beauty. When you sigh remember that some day you will chuckle;—chuckle at your emotional extravagance. And when you are prosy keep a taper lighted at the shrine of poetry. Be a humorist as well as a lover, and love will be saved from many a danger of collapse.

Thus far we have seen that love ought to be self-sacrificial, in the will as well as in the passions, and matter-of-fact as well as idealistic. We should like to develop some of the other traits of true love; but since time is hurrying, a brief enumeration of

them, with a word of explanation, must suffice.

Lovers must be as courteous to each other after marriage as they were before. For, though love is a fundamental thing of the heart, and courtesy only a superficial thing of looks, manners and speech, yet love depends upon courtesy; it is sustained and increased by attention to the outward niceties; it suffers from rudeness, coldness, and a matter-of-fact familiarity. Save some of your lover's exquisiteness of address for married life. Do not spend your whole treasure of gracious words before the time arrives when graciousness of speech will be needed most. Attention to each other's tastes, regard for each other's preferences, considerateness toward each other's susceptibilities, anticipation of each other's needs, foresight as to each other's wishes; the giving of gifts, invitations to places of amusement:—Oh, Brethren, how these passing trifles, as light as air, bind hearts together more firmly than bands of brass!

One form of courtesy in particular, conversation, ought to be the staple of domestic life. "A man of wise words makes him-

self beloved," says Holy Writ. Before marriage conversation is spontaneous; there is no end of it; emotion and imagination supply material. But after marriage conversation must be made. Each one must be ready to take the initiative; to make an effort to cover the bare, blank walls of monotonous silence with a rare tapestry of sociability, dextrously woven out of the little nothings of their experience.

Married lovers must be dramatic; i.e., each one must have the power of throwing himself out of himself into the other's personality, taking his point of view. For, each sex has its special strength and weakness. Man and woman are not parallels but contrasts in their respective good and bad qualities. When a husband is moody and critical he will see in his partner feminine defects which he certainly has not; he will see in himself masculine virtues which she certainly does not possess. And vice-versa with her. But if both have sufficient magnanimity to look at life through each other's eyes, he will see his masculine defects and her feminine amiability; she will see her feminine defects and his masculine amiability; and both will be merciful and admire.

Lovers must be such in fact, not only in name. Some marry to suit their parents' choice; some, to have a home; some, to avoid the so-called misfortune of single life; some, because marriage is the recognized normal condition of life; some, to boast of possessing a husband as they might boast of possessing a limousine; some, to have a good time; and some, out of sympathy. Whatever such persons be, they are not lovers in fact. A number of them are unsexed. They lack the elemental passion of the heart. They have educated themselves out of the sphere of sex. They have been refined into a condition of emotional passivity. Culture, so-called, has taken the place of humanity in them. With them, strong feeling is vulgar. Intellectuality, aristocratic coldness, colorless aloofness, isolation from every form of sentiment;—a sort of unnatural and proud virginity of mind has robbed them of their manhood and womanliness and replaced these two noble things with a spurious gentlemanliness and ladyhood.

I am not speaking of voluntary continence of life, founded on the motive of imitating Christ, His mother and the saints. That kind of integrity does not postulate in those

who practice it a contempt for human love and an evaporation of the feelings of the heart. In such men and women the passions remain; but they are controlled and directed toward the Great Lover Himself and toward humanity. The ascetical ideal is not the same as the unsexed ideal. Asceticism in a world already too fond of pleasure is a chaste reminder, inspiration and deterrent even to the most sensuous. It is the lily of unearthliness at the side of the rose of earthy love. Its white coolness keeps the ruddy glow of human love from charring the rose to a cinder of gross sensuality. But unsexed passivity has neither the merit of virginity nor the joy and nobility of love.

Finally, lovers must keep in mind the right of mutual reservation. Each one says to the other in their fresh intensity of devotion: "I give myself wholly to you!" But such a gift they do not and cannot offer. They give as much as they can. But one thing they cannot give, and that is, the key to each other's heart of heart. Each man's heart is inexplicable to himself. How can he make it a problem, easy of solution to another? God alone understands him, un-

derstands her; how then can wife or husband hope to? There is a mysteriousness in the simplest soul. There are recesses unexplored by the keenest intuition of self-examination. Hence, expect not too much to be revealed to your searching eyes.

Even if perfect revelation were possible, it would not be desirable. For a certain half-revealed and half-concealed mysteriousness is one of the elements of attractiveness. A mountain has greater charm, enveloped in its tenuous veil of mist and atmosphere, than it has without that covering. Could a lover see the whole length and breadth and depth of his beloved's soul, he would be satiated and find her insipid and stale. But because there is always more to be discovered in her, his life is, or at least can be, a romantic quest of the unknown.

Moreover love is a union, not a fusion. Fusion means a blending of components. In a fusion the components, in a sense, lose their identity. But union means a combination of elements, each one of which retains its identity. And the more each one remains itself, the more solidly can both combine. A mutual love involves the play of two opposite forces. The forces must re-

main intact, to carry on the play. To sum up then,—a curiosity to know everything attacks an impossibility, dissipates the charm of mystery, and detracts from the individuality and forcefulness of love.

I hardly need say that I am not discouraging marital candor nor encouraging deceit, sly concealments, double-dealing and that independence and isolation of thought which oftentimes divorces two minds before the divorce of the flesh.

Such is the love, perpetuated by the marriage contract and sanctified by the marriage sacrament, upon which Jesus wished to place the seal of approbation by being present at the wedding-feast of Cana. If your love is such, if your union is made by such a contract and sanctified by such a sacrament, He will approve of it by attending your wedding in its incipiency and continuation through life. What a consolation to have Christ as a guest at your espousal and as a companion for life! See to it then, that 1st, your love be genuine; 2nd, that your matrimonial contract be well-considered before it is made; that it have in view perpetuity of union, eternity of love and children, and their thorough education in the religion

of Christ; 3rd, that it be regarded and devoutly approached as Christ's sacrament;—as a treasury full of grace, an abundant source of spiritual helpfulness which is intended by Him to be for you a means of moderating passion, spiritualizing love, solidifying union, increasing joy, lessening the weight of adversity, adding strength, administering consolation and shedding light upon you in your duties as husband and wife, mother and father, neighbors, citizens, and children of the Church.

Place far from you the thought of a marriage without true love; of a contract that may be broken; of a sacrament that is only a sort of spiritual ornament of the wedding ceremony. Marry in church. Enter the church before entering your home. Sanctify your wedding before delighting in it. Be sure to draw down God's blessing upon your union, not His curse. Matrimonial love can easily deteriorate into sensuality. See to it that the angels shall hover over you, to keep it unblemished. Christ's union with the Church His bride is a model of your union with your beloved. The grace of the sacrament is the grace of likening yourself to Him. Receive it, therefore, oh

man, with the whole devotion of your heart, so that you may feel for your spouse all the tenderness which He felt for His; so that you may manifest to her all the reverent respect which He manifested to His; so that you may show her the solicitous care which He showed His; so that you may extend to her the courtesies of life and work for her subsistence, comfort and enjoyment; so that you may direct her and the household with gracious authority, with authoritative graciousness, after the manner of Christ in His dealings with the Church. Receive it, oh woman, with the whole devotion of your heart; so that you may realize that it was Christ and His sacrament that raised womanhood from the plane of sexual slavery to the level of honored wifehood and motherhood; so that you may remember that your present dignity in social and domestic life will be best insured by maintaining the religious character of the marriage tie; so that you may be reminded that your first duty and noblest work and sweetest privilege are to bring children into life and to rear them for the family, the State, the Church and the Kingdom of Christ beyond

the grave; so that you may take to heart that principally in your hands rests the making of home; a work which takes precedence over social work, work of the clubs, civic endeavors and even state and national enterprise.

And that you may run no risk of making your marriage a failure, marry in your own Church. I dare say that any responsible Protestant minister would give similar advice to prospective husbands and wives of his flock. "Mixed marriages" are discouraged and all but absolutely forbidden by the Church. The Council of Baltimore makes this clear. A dispensation is sometimes given for weighty reasons, on request. It is given however with reluctance, regret, warnings and under conditions that must be observed. The giving of it ought not to put the recipient wholly at ease. Avoidance of worse evils is the only motive for the concession. The concession is, as it were, wrung from the Church by her persistent child. Such a child is not ideal. Affection for his spiritual mother has little place in his heart. The Church forbids him to take the step; but because she revokes her pro-

hibition for a grave cause, he is satisfied to pursue his course. Clearly here we have not a filial attitude.

The Church does not oppose mixed marriages because she passes an adverse judgment upon the personal character of the non-Catholic lady or gentleman; nor because she holds that every Catholic would make a better mate for a Catholic than a non-Catholic. Examples of unhappy Catholic marriages are numerous; whereas some mixed marriages have been happy. But she is averse to mixed marriages for the evident reason that a domestic difference so fundamental as that of religion can hardly be, without grave danger of unhappiness, coolness in religion and loss of faith. If the Catholic is lukewarm, he will become an indifferentist; perhaps a Protestant. If he is fervent, he will feel keenly his partner's alienation in faith; he will lack the encouragement in devotional practices, which comes from companionship; he will be religiously isolated and alone. Perhaps he will be wondered at by his partner, chafed, laughed at, even pitied; and few can bear all that with equanimity. Worst of all, the children will notice a divided household,

possibly will take sides, and will deduct from the importance of their religion, in accordance with one of the parent's depreciation of it. At least they will lack that finish, completeness and naturalness of religious thought, sentiment, manner and action, which are the chief charms of Christian life. At times the marriage-promises made to the Catholic are not kept. Remember, too, that the non-Catholic does not consider himself bound by as stringent divorce laws as bind you; nor by the strict law of birth which you must in conscience obey.

For these reasons, even when the Church grants a dispensation the couple are not married in Church; much less at Mass. They are married in the pastoral parlor or at home or in some other secular place. True, in case the non-Catholic is a Christian they receive the Sacrament. In that sense, Christ and His Church are present at their nuptials. But not in the fuller sense implied in the presence of the altar, the Eucharist, and Mass.

I am not speaking thus, to discourage those who have already taken the step and entered mixed marriage; nor to point an offensive finger at a condition of life which

the Church does not approve; nor to call in question that some mixed marriages have been happy; nor to deny that conversions to Catholicity have resulted from them. But I am addressing you in this vein (as the teachers of the Church ought frequently to do), to recall to your minds her grave attitude towards mixed marriages, in order that young persons may understand her attitude and accept it; and that parents may consider the imprudence of encouraging such marriages or even of being indifferent to them. Good can come out of them; but the good is not certain and the danger of harm is too great.

What then will you do? Do not wait until love has conquered you. Then, the difficulty of receding will be too great. Take proper steps while your mind is still in a normal state. Do not encourage a pre-nuptial conversion which is not founded upon the grace of God, but upon affection for you. If the prospect of a sincere conversion is in evidence, encourage it. If not, or if the prospect does not materialize, break off the relationship.

That will involve a sacrifice. But you may entertain the high hope that if you are willing to make a sacrifice for religion's

sake, God, who is never outdone in generosity, will bless you with another union more after His own heart. That will involve a sacrifice; but remember, Christ said: "If any man would come after Me, let him take up his cross and follow Me." That will involve a sacrifice; but the sacrifice possibly will save you from great unhappiness, of which now in your fresh unseeing enthusiasm you do not dream. That will involve a sacrifice; but Christ will help you make it and will comfort you in the making.

Would you like to have Christ at your wedding, as He was at the bridal-feast of Cana? This is the way of having Him! Have Him; so that He may pour joy into your heart on your wedding day and on all the days of your married life; so that He may change the plain water of your ordinary experiences into the delicious wine of an extraordinary happiness; so that the butler's words may apply to you: "When the chief-steward had tasted the water made wine, he called the bride-groom and saith to him: Every man at first setteth forth good wine, and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse, but thou hast kept the good wine until now." Yes, in too many

marriages each sets out for the other, their best wine first; but as time goes on, the worse wine puts in its appearance. In the beginning all is sweetness, mutual courtesy, and delight. Then, slackening of affection, lukewarmness, coldness, perhaps even aversion and hate. Have Christ in your married life; then, the good wine of your first marital delights will be bettered from day to day by the miraculous hand of Christ your Lord, until that day when at His banquet-board in heaven, at which He celebrates everlastingly His espousal with the Church, you and your beloved, His eternal guests, will sit, drinking deep and deeper yet of your mutual earth-born love, fortified and fired by celestial ingredients.

MARY AND MARTHA

St. Luke, ch. 10, vs. 38–42.

"Now it came to pass as they went, that He entered a certain town; and a certain woman, named Martha, received Him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, who sitting also at the Lord's feet, heard His word. But Martha was busy about much serving. Who stood and said: Lord, hast thou no care that my sister hath left me alone to serve? Speak to her therefore that she help me. And the Lord answering said to her: Martha, Martha, thou art careful and art troubled about many things. But one thing is necessary, Mary hath chosen the best part, which shall not be taken away from her."

RELIGION AND CULTURE

The lesson of this scene is the lesson of learning at the feet of Christ; the lesson of the comparative unimportance of material industry; the lesson of the all-importance of education in the doctrines of Christ;—the lesson of the crime of leading a life disjoined from Christ and of preparing children for life without allowing them to be influenced by Him. This is clear. For since Christ praised Mary for sitting at His feet and learning from Him, He praises those who study in His school now. And since He blamed Martha for separating herself from His influence in her efforts to serve, He blames those who keep themselves and their children apart from Him and His teaching during their period of preparation for service in the family, the community and the state.

For Brethren, morality, uprightness, character—this is *the* thing worth while in life; and this is impossible or at least extremely difficult without Christ; and Christ

and Christianity can hardly be adequately imparted to the young except in school. I know that in saying this I am running counter to the feelings and convictions of many. But that cannot be helped. What I say is true; and truth in such an important matter ought to be declared. We Christians have been too silent on this point. We must dare tell the truth even at the risk of unpopularity, misinterpretation and enmity. Those who have no religion at all have had things too much their own way. Because different sets of Christians have differed with one another as to what form of Christianity shall be taught in school, the non-Christian has succeeded in having *no* Christianity taught in school. On the plea of tolerance he demands a school which shall tolerate his unbelief. But, by that very demand he refuses to tolerate in the school of his choice any form of belief. "Intolerance" means holding to one's own belief and downing another's belief. "Tolerance" means holding to one's own belief and bearing with another's belief. "Capitulation" means yielding up one's own belief that another's belief may prevail. And we Christians (at least our separated Brethren of

the Protestant Religion), in our aversion to intolerance, in our wish to be tolerant in the schools toward non-believers, have capitulated. Americans believe in freedom of religions in the state and in the school, but they do not believe, or, at least, ought not to believe, in the freedom to banish religion from the state and school. This is a Christian country in its origin and character. Hence we are not morally free as a nation to be non-Christian; in conscience we cannot capitulate to unbelief; and since, as we shall see, Christianity in the schools is necessary for Christianity in the state, schools ought to be Christian. May I say candidly tonight without offence that while Protestants may intelligibly differ with Catholics as to *how* Christianity should be taught in school, it is hard to understand why so many Protestants should be opposed to the Catholic's position *that* Christianity should be taught in school; and should take sides with non-Christians in maintaining a non-Christian, godless school. The question as to the manner in which the schools shall be Christianized is a difficult one from a practical point of view, and I do not propose to try to answer it tonight. But the

question as to the need of Christianizing them in some manner is not a difficult question; it is a very simple one; it admits of only one answer; an answer in the affirmative.

I anticipate how this sermon will be excoriated by non-believers and how they will begin to put in practice the cowardly and dishonest system of tagging; tagging me "intolerant," "Romish," "reactionary," "enemy of the public schools," thereby trying to discredit my words in the eyes of the prejudiced and overcredulous. But I do not understand why Protestant Christians will not be able to see that my appeal for Christianity is their affair as well as mine. Some may say "mind your business. Attend to your parochial schools. We shall attend to our public schools. What interest is it to you how our children are educated?" To which I answer with justice and truth: It is my business as an American to be as much interested in the public schools as any other man in the land. The parochial schools are ours because we pay for them; the public schools also are ours in part because we pay for them in part. Moreover as an American I am interested in

every American school boy and girl whether they be Protestant, Jew, Atheist or Catholic; and above all I am interested in my country which depends so gravely for its welfare upon the education of the young. Christ says: "This is eternal life, that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent;" and I wish that His words may be hearkened to. Christ says plaintively: "Just Father the world hath not known Thee;" and I wish that the cause of that complaint may be removed. Christ says: "Suffer the little children to come unto Me and prevent them not;" and I wish to see American school children at His knees. Christ says: "Learn of Me, for I am meek and humble of heart;" and I wish to see their hearts filled with His meekness and humility. Christ says: "I am the way, the truth and the life;" and I wish to have them walk His way, know His truth, and lead His life. Christ says: "I am the true light which enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world;" and I wish to see their minds steeped in the effulgent splendor of His light.

It may cause surprise to some of you to

hear how many authoritative Protestants agree with Catholics in their attitude toward Christianity in the schools. Roosevelt said: "There is no word in the English language more abused than the word 'education.' It is a fine thing to be clever, to be able, to be smart. But it is a better thing to have the qualities that find their expression in the Decalogue and the Golden Rule. We must have education in the broadest sense;—education of the soul as well as the mind. The future of this country depends upon the way in which the average boy and girl are brought up." Vice-President Marshall said: "In our day there are too many men losing their moorings. In my opinion no man is educated for citizenship until trained in body and mind and heart to reverence the Omnipotent God and to know that Jesus Christ is the Supreme Ruler of mankind." Wm. Jennings Bryan said: "The heart has more to do with human destiny than the hand or head. The pure of heart shall see God. I want my boy, if he is to dig ditches, to begin his digging with the best education the country can give; but the education of the heart is above the education of the head." Hon. Amasa Thornton in the *North*

American Review wrote: "The children and youth of today must be given instruction in the truths of the Bible and Christian precepts. Such instruction can only be given successfully by an almost entire change of policy and practice on the question of religious teaching in the public schools, and the encouragement of private schools in which sound religious teaching is given." The *Educational Review:* "More than one-half of the children of this land now receive no religious education." Rev. Dr. Wolf of the Gettysburg Theological Seminary before the Evangelical Alliance: "Moral training has for the most part been cast out of our public schools. Every faculty but the highest is exercised and invigorated. Our young men and women will be graduated from our schools as moral imbeciles." The *New York Times*: "The movement of the Roman Catholics to secure a system of education which shall not ignore religion is a movement in the right direction." Prof. Walter Athern of Drake University: "The United States will become the greatest pagan country the world has ever known unless some system of religious education is adopted in

the nation." The *New York Sun*: "The Baptist ministers of New York, Brooklyn, and New Jersey voted on January 19, 1915, to urge all Protestant churches to copy the Roman Catholic plan of seeing that school-children get religious instruction." Dr. Cadman, at the graduation exercises of Central High of Detroit, said last January: "The safety of the State does not depend upon armies, navies, or upon the wisdom of statesmen, but upon the fear and love of God. Intellectuality will never save America. If culture could save the world, then Athens not Calvary would be the centre of the world."

Brethren, all this is true. For we rightly wish our boys and girls to be not only intellectual but good; goodness is impossible without moral training; and moral training cannot be given effectively without religion. Not what we know counts most, but what we are. Character-training is more important than head-training; and since even infidels admit that Christ was the superbest character in the world, why should He not be allowed to influence the studying child? One ounce of morality is better than a thousand pounds of culture. Personally, if I

had to become a cultured gentleman at the cost of ceasing to be a moral man, I should elect to remain a boor all my days. We all prefer an upright man to a sharp man; a transparently pure woman to a brilliant one. Captains of industry pin their faith to the honesty rather than to the cleverness of their employees.

Morality must be taught. It is not a thing that spontaneously takes root and flourishes in the soul. True, unless a man be satanic, a very Iago of maliciousness, he will experience at times some rudimentary feelings of morality, without training. But feeling moral is not the same thing as acting morally. You may feel like giving a charity to a poor man but you are not charitable in fact if you walk on with the silver piece in your pocket, leaving him hungry and cold. Moral feelings prevail so long as we are not tested by trial. But under the stress of temptation they recede to a corner of the heart unless they have been developed by training into moral convictions and moral habits of the will. Besides, rudimentary morality, even though it be in the convictions and will, is not sufficient. For surely Christian life ought to be character-

ized by the finer perceptions of moral obligation and by its detailed execution. Now, refined morality is the fruit of painstaking efforts. For its beauty is high, delicate, perceptible only by a practiced and pure eye; it is not tawdry, sumptuous, highly-colored and voluptuous. "Blessed are the clean of heart; for they shall see God." Blessed are the clean of eye for they, and they alone, shall see the loveliness of morality. Again, morality must be taught because we have an inborn tendency downward toward immorality, which is as pronounced as the gravitating tendency of a stone. It is an habitual, life-lasting, pleasurable and strong tendency; and we must develop a habit of morality by training, over against it.

Training must be started in the young. For, since from the very moment of first consciousness evil inclinations make their pressure felt, the slender, delicate stock of the uncultivated tree will be bent and will harden with increasing age into a crooked trunk which can hardly be straightened in its maturity. Moreover, in youth the most violent passion of the heart is in its first fierce activity, and sensuous allurement is

at its height. Control of human emotions at that time of life is most imperative. For, an easy compliance with erotic instincts will result in a spiritual prostration from which it will be a very, very arduous task to recover in later life.

Finally morality must be taught in school. For secular education and training in morality are so closely related that they cannot be separated without injury to both. Man is not double;—made up of two separate air-tight compartments, the one his intellect for knowledge and the other his will for morality. But he is *one* man, with all his powers intimately conjoined, acting in unison upon the once concrete reality which we call life. And any system of education which tears asunder the intellectual and moral training of a youth does violence to his nature, pulling apart two psychological vines closely intertwined. A teacher of science and art ought to be in school to defend science and art from the exaggerated claims of a mistaken system of morality. A teacher of morality ought to be in school to defend morality from the exaggerated claims of a mistaken system of science and art. Secular History ought not to have the whole

say about events of the past; nor Economics about the production and distribution of wealth; nor Psychology, about the soul; nor Chemistry, about the constitution of matter; nor Geology, about the antiquity of the earth; nor Biology, about the nature and origin of life; nor the Science of Aestheticism, about the pursuit of the beautiful. But the Science of Morality also ought to have its say about these subjects. These subjects pertain more or less directly to it. They have a bearing upon man's moral activities as well as upon his intellectual culture. Again, morality is a science as difficult as any other, requiring much time and expert treatment. So too is Religion, without which, as we shall see, morality is well-nigh impossible. Parents are too engrossed in manifold domestic obligations to impart adequately lessons of morality to their children. Sunday schools, with their brief periods and amateur teachers, have not met and cannot meet the requirements. Sunday is a day of rest. It ought not to be converted into a day of intellectual work for children. After their week's efforts in school, they are too weary to be able to take up successfully the scientific study of moral

obligations. Worst of all, they will almost inevitably form an erroneous judgment about the comparative value of morality and secular science, to the disadvantage of the former;—a judgment founded upon the contrasting amounts of time assigned by their elders to each branch.

Morality must be taught in school; and the only means of teaching it successfully is religion. For the only other possible means, culture, is inadequate. We have often heard it said: "Educate the masses and you will make them moral." Nothing is falser than that, if by education is meant mere intellectual culture. For while intellectual culture is a beautiful thing it is no guarantee for uprightness of life. Let us dwell at length on this point, so that we may unmask the most subtle heresy of the day.

Culture may be defined as natural refinement, humane development, the expansion of our mental, imaginative and emotional faculties. It is refinement of mind, keenness of intuition, breadth of view, depth of reflection, saneness of judgment, exactness, clearness, swiftness of deduction, solidity of mental principles, tenacity and capacious-

ness of memory, splendor of imagination, quickness of wit, vivacity of fancy, warmth of emotion, delicacy of instinct, correctness and nicety of taste; grace, dignity and ease of deportment, eloquence of speech;—in general, culture is that assemblage of intellectual and aesthetic qualities which constitute the lady or gentleman.

Now it must be evident in the first place that culture thus described,—something, namely, quite distinct from morality—is an excellent thing, worth having for itself. Even if there were no heaven to be won, no virtue to be practiced, no morality to be acquired, no commandments to be kept, even if everything were to end with death, culture would be worth acquiring and preserving. For surely, aside from any question of morality, a clear mind is better than a dark one, warmth of affection is preferable to insensibility, a good memory is more desirable than a poor one, grace of manner is better than boorishness, social amenities are better than social aloofness and power of expression is better than poverty of speech. I do not say that culture is the best thing in the world; morality is better; religion is better, common honesty, laboriousness and diligence

are better; but I do say it is very good.

It is good in itself; and it is good as a means (though not as a sufficient means), to morality. For clearly (all other things being equal), the better a man's mind, heart and imagination are cultivated, the better he ought to be morally. I do not say: the better he is; but, the better he *ought* to be. Surely the faculties given us by God have not been given us in vain; but they would have been given in vain if they did not help morality; for morality is the service of God, which is the only thing in life not in vain. Culture, it is true, is not a sanctifier; but it is at least a civilizer; and civilization ought to be an ally of sanctity. A good natural education, like a good natural soil, ought to have a beneficial effect upon the seed of virtue. Therefore good breeding ought to help good living. Poetry ought to help prayer. Literature ought to help piety. Sociability ought to help fraternal charity. A good judgment ought to help a good conscience. Refinement of manners ought to help refinement of virtue, and the very preoccupation of the mind with arts and sciences ought to be a means of excluding from it numerous immoralities. This *ought* to

be the case; and it will be, so long as no adverse element interferes.

And as culture lends itself to the personal morality of a cultured man, so it lends itself also and more powerfully to the moral improvement of those with whom he may have to deal. Brethren, you must be Apostles—all of you—drawing your neighbor to a better life. Now remember that an Apostle must be, as far as circumstances permit, not only a moral being, but also a naturally cultivated lady or gentleman. The grace of God is more excellent than the refinements of man; but the refinements of man are hardly less important in dealing with men. For while men of the world are too often blind to the loveliness of grace, they are keenly sensitive to the gifts, the accomplishments, the amiability of mere humanity. You may possess the purity of an angel and yet, if, through your own fault, you do not possess a corresponding purity of diction; you may have the grace of God in abundance, and yet, if through your own negligence, you have not a like grace of natural character, your influence for good upon the too natural world will not be what it well might be. If you were to approach pure

spirits with pure spirituality, you would suceed with them; but not with men. But if you attempt to draw men with the "cords of Adam," with the silken cords of human amenities, numbers of them will first love your natural gifts, then your gifts of grace and finally the Giver of both. Thus they enter through the door of nature and pass on and up to heaven through the portals of grace. Since, therefore, you are Apostles, all of you, why not cultivate your natural powers according to your opportunities so as to increase your efficiency in dealing with the world?

The devil draws men to sin by the attractiveness of refinement; why should you not draw them to God by the same means? Men do not embrace sin for the sake of its ugliness, but on account of its fair natural disguise, and they will not readily accept what they think is the ugliness of virtue unless virtue be clothed in the same disguise. The difference, therefore, between an apostle of Christ and an apostle of Satan, ought not to be that the latter is naturally refined and the former is not. Both of them may be refined; the difference being that the one employs his accomplishments for the devil

and sin; the other employs his for God. If we do not believe and act on this truth, we shall give worldlings occasion to imagine that all the human attractiveness is on their side and none of it on ours; that they, forsooth, are to go through the world arrayed in purple, crimson and gold; and the virtuous, in sack-cloth and ashes. Let us not mislead them. The poet, says: "beauty should go beautifully;" and God wishes that the beauty of virtue should be enhanced by the graceful garb of natural refinement.

But when we have said this much in favor of culture as an aid to morality, we have said all that can be said for it. It is an aid to morality; but not a sufficient aid. Something else is necessary.

It is not sufficient. For morality in the present order of Providence, is supernatural, whereas culture is merely natural; and between the natural and the supernatural there is no proportion. By no natural means can we attain to a supernatural end. But even for merely *natural* morality culture is inadequate. For it is certain that neither culture nor any other means without grace, can enable any man to remain even naturally moral. Hence the plea com-

monly heard: "I don't need religion; I love my family, I pay my debts, I am good to my fellow-men; I have the right attitude toward God;—what else is required? I can do all this without religion;"—that plea is not founded on truth. For the men that make it are either secretly assisted by the graces of religion, without their knowledge, or they are not. If they are, evidently they rest on religion; if not, either they are not moral, or they will not long remain so.

The insufficiency of culture for morality can be easily explained. For these two forces, culture and morality, are in two distinct spheres of activity. Morality is in the will; culture is in the mind. The object of morality is the *good;* the object of culture is the *true* and *beautiful.* Culture refines a man; morality makes him strong. Hence, a gentleman can be refined to the nicest point, without having a shadow of morality. He can be mentally exquisite and morally vile. He can be a paragon of culture and yet a degenerate. The fair lily of artistic and social refinement is sometimes rooted in a swamp of turpitude; nice manners often veil unspeakable corruption, elegant conversation often distils from leprous minds.

No, the mind is not the will; culture is not virtue; refinement is not morality; elegance is not purity; mentality is not sanctity; good judgment is not a good conscience; clear, clean-cut thinking is not clean living;—refined instincts, delicate tastes, aesthetic sentiments, graceful attitudes of mind, social finish, quickness of perception and the other qualities belonging to culture, however sweet and amiable they may be, are distinctly quite a different thing from virtue, from morality. And it is well for us in cultivating them to keep in mind what they are, and what they are not; what purpose they serve, and what purpose they do not serve; to remember that they are graceful adornments of life; negative dispositions for morality, but nothing more than that. And yet no heresy is more prevalent today than to mistake them for virtue; today, when in our literature, social life and on our stage (when it is not corrupt), humane accomplishments, refinement, finished manners, intellectual tone are presented to us as being the sum-total of things worth while.

Once a lady said of Newman: "He must be a holy man." Newman heard of the remark and wrote: "Madam, do not mistake.

I have had opportunities of cultivating my mind, but pray remember that mental cultivation is no guarantee for holiness." We ourselves, perhaps, have seen many a girl, gone forth into life from among the lilies, soon dragging her smirched skirts in the mire, because, forsooth, she trusted the safeguarding of her innocence to her natural refinement of instinct instead of setting herself down upon the firm basis of religion; and many a young man, leaving the portals of school and soon falling away from his high estate, because he trusted in culture instead of trusting in grace.

The Philosopher in Samuel Johnson's Rasselas, said to the youth: "Study philosophy, young man, and your virtue will be immune from attack." Shortly afterwards the youth found the Philosopher in great distress. "What's the matter?" he asked. The only answer was: "My daughter, oh, my daughter; death hath taken her from me." The youth said: "But this is only one of the superficial vicissitudes of life; your deep learning ought to make you immune from grief." "Young man," he said, "of what good is my learning to me now? Can it help me to bear this crushing blow?"

No, Brethren, it could not. And when grief, discouragement, temptations to sensuality, pride, anger, sloth, and hatred come upon us, culture is not a sufficient defense. When a man stands at the open grave of his beloved, his broken heart is not mended by aestheticism. When a young man is being allured from a clean and wholesome life by the glamour of lasciviousness, something more than a sense of respectability is needed to check him. The equipments of social, literary, and artistic life are sufficient for fair-weather morality, but when the storm comes they are shattered to bits. We all have passions, and when the passions arise in their volcanic might, the whole exquisite fabric of cultural defenses breaks before their maddened rush.

But the insufficiency of refinement is not its worst feature. Refinement oftentimes becomes an enemy of virtue. Learning leads to pride; literature deifies nature and humanity; aestheticism lies close to hedonism; refinement degenerates into effeminacy. How many philosophers there are, without humility! How many poets, without purity! How many artists, without manliness! How many gentlemen, who are not men!

How many ladies, who are not real women! Has not history borne sad testimony that too often nations rise from crude ways to natural refinement and then sink into unnatural crimes? We know the depths of moral infamy to which Greece and Rome sank from the apex of artistic and literary excellence. And think of our country! We can remember ruder days; but these are the days of American wealth, luxury, social amenities, intellectual pretensions. God grant that we too may not go down from the crest of the wave into the trough!

Brethren, culture is good in itself; it tends to help morality; but it is not a sufficient help; indeed it sometimes harms morality. Something else is needed for a virtuous life; and that is religion.

Religion contains three essential factors; 1st, a Creed; 2nd, Commandments; 3d, Prayer and Sacraments; requiring of us, three corresponding activities: Faith, Morality and Use. For we must have faith in the Creed, obey the Commandments and use Prayer and the Sacraments. Now it is evident that religion is sufficient for a virtuous life; and indeed incomparably superior to culture. The truths of the Creed are far

more appealing than those of reason. The prohibitions of sin, as expressed in the 10 Commandments amid the lightning and thunder of Mt. Sinai, are far more arresting than those same prohibitions, as expressed in the natural law. Prayer and the Sacraments are far more strengthening than the natural aids of the will. The Creed teaches the truths of Heaven, the beauty of God, the charm of virtue, the ugliness of sin, the wrath of God, the punishment of sin, the nobility of self-conquest so forcefully that now we have a most persuasive motive to be good. The commandments clearly explain what we must do to be good. Prayer and the Sacraments strongly and sweetly help us to be good.

Non-Catholic educators are realizing that education in school without morality has been a most disastrous affair; that morality is impossible without religion and that religion can supply the need. Every Catholic knows what religion means to Catholics! How it keeps unsuccessful men from despair, the grief-stricken from pessimism, the youthful from immoral ways; how it sustains the sick, strengthens the strong, restrains the high-spirited, moderates the rich;

how in general it enlightens the mind, comforts and warms the heart and energizes the will.

Religion does still more. It not only helps morality. It also refines in a human way. Culture can civilize but cannot sanctify. Religion can sanctify and civilize. It was the civilizer of Europe for centuries, as even Protestants admit; and we have fallen into the barbarism and savagery of the war because sovereigns of Europe attempted to settle their differences before the war by worldly prudence alone, according to the dictates of naturally cultivated intellects, without letting the religious teachings of the Prince of Peace direct their course. Diplomacy, statesmanship, embassies, ministries, peace conferences, Leagues of Nations in which God is apparently ignored; and in general, the whole apparatus of civilized life will never preserve nor restore peace without the Prince of Peace.

When we turn from states to individuals, how often are we not surprised to find the members of so-called cultured, irreligious families, vulgarians;—ladies and gentlemen who consider themselves privileged by virtue of their standing in society, to do things

and to say things which would condemn less pretentious people to the ranks of the under-world? And how often do we not encounter poor women and men who, without having educational advantages, are perfect ladies and gentlemen? Their refinement may be instinctive; it may be inborn, a natural inheritance, like a fair flower springing from a rude soil; but most likely, in most cases, it is the natural by-product of supernatural religion. Newman tells us that when he went into poverty-stricken and desolate Ireland, he was astonished. For, poor men received him to their homes with all the courtesy of a lord, welcoming him to the manor; and poor women had the easy grace of hostesses of social standing. Their religion was all they had; but that was enough; for it sanctified and civilized.—And why ought not religion have that effect? For since our Lord was not only the Son of God and the Preacher of morality but also the Model of courtliness; and since Mary was not only a saint, but the perfection of ladyhood, ought not women whose religion teaches them to contemplate her, become ladies; ought not men whose religion teaches

them to contemplate Him, become gentlemen?

A few more words about the *sort* of religion I wish to have in the schools!—I want a religion of personal love, fear, joy and dogma.

What is needed in life is personal religion. The world has quite generally gone wrong through lack of it. Men, in earthly pursuits, succeed only when the personal element enters their calculations. Men fall in love, not with an abstract principle but with a concrete individual; and they make heroic sacrifices for him or her, not because they are commanded nor because they are threatened nor because they know it is right to make them nor because they expect a reward; but because they love. The love of concrete individuals is the force that makes the world move. It makes families; it initiates great enterprises; it starts and ends wars; it vivifies ambition and lessens the strain of adversity. Without concrete individuals, there would be no love in life; and without love, there would be nothing! How then can we expect that deeds of value, requiring self-conquest, will be done in the

spiritual life so long as there is no love in it; and how can there be love in it so long as it remains impersonal; and for Christians, how can it be personal so long as its object is not the personal amiability of Christ.

Most men, I imagine, regard the Church as a huge machine, powerful, smooth-running and efficient. Christ above, they think, directs it with as little personal concern as an engineer might feel for his engine. They regard themselves merely as bolts and cogs of the machine. Hence their spiritual mediocrity! For if you tell a man that he is a bolt or a cog he will have about as much personal interest in religion as a bolt or cog has in its work. But tell him on the contrary that he is somebody; that he is prized by Christ as an individual and that he may offer Christ a personal service which will be prized; and forthwith, his imagination kindles, his heart is warmed, his activity mounts, he loves and for the sake of love he is willing to down the ignoble part of him. Now the Church is not a machine but a mother who tries to make us understand that Christ is a living, loving, lovable Personality.

Awake; try to catch the significance of personal religion; and have your children learn its significance. Follow Christ with intimate devotion; and see that they do the same. Be chivalric. Be knightly. You belong to the spiritual aristocracy of the Son of God. You are of the blood-royal of the Crucified. You belong to an ancient House, venerable with twenty centuries, whose coat of arms bears the coronet of thorns, the armorial bar of the spear, the heraldic device of the inscription of the Cross and the imperial red of your Savior's blood. Realize this; teach them to realize it; and you may hope that their religion will be worthy of the name.

In the second place, I want a religion of fear. The fear of God is a tonic for jaded souls. The fear of God, however, is out of style today. We hear too many talking exclusively of the mercy of God and man's service of love. Mercy is sweeter than justice; but justice is one of God's attributes. A God without justice would be unworthy of the name. We would despise Him if He did not hate sin. Love is better than fear; but fear is good. Fear is one of the gifts of the Holy Ghost; it is the beginning

of wisdom; one of the gifts which Christ Himself possessed. Love without fear is sentimental flabbiness. Fear of God is like the back-bone of a man. It give firmness and strength to the spiritual life. Moreover, only a fearful appreciation of the eternal risks we run in life can make the winning of heaven a delight. Predestination to eternal glory, without any fear, on our part, of eternal loss, would make life a drab monotonous thing. It is the winning of heaven, united to a constant possibility of losing it, that makes life a romance. We are interested in the hero of a romantic tale because he is always escaping harm by a hairbreadth; and we are interested in the human souls of others and our own, because, up to the finish of the last great fight of death, both heaven and hell are possibilities. Take the thought of heaven out of your life, and it will not be worth living; take the thought of hell and judgment out of your life, and it will lose the tang and zest of a thrilling experience. The fear of Judgment is not therefore unworthy of man; but it is manly. It rises out of a recognition of the awful possibility of miscarriage of the most manly faculty we possess

—our free will; and out of a recognition of the two Divine attributes which lend dignity to God's Love, i.e., His Justice and Sanctity.

I want a religion of fear; and also a religion of strength, consolation and joy. Not a sombre religion, which takes all the joy out of life! Melancholy never was a mark of true religion. We have enough sadness in life, without making life sadder by religion. There is a healthy seriousness which comes from seeing and taking life as it is. Religion teaches us seriousness;—but sadness, never! The truly religious are the most joyous; because they have hope in the beyond; they know that earthly tribulation is not the worst that can befall a man; and the grace of Christ enables them to carry on in conflicts, to bear up under reverses, to keep within bounds in success. In a word, it gives peace, joy and strength to men.

Finally I want a religion of dogma. It is very unpopular to say this now. An oft-repeated statement heard these days is, that fortunately the war has done away with the religion of dogma and substituted the religion of service. The trouble, Brethren, is,

that in the past we have had too little dogma, not too much. If there has not been enough service, the shortage has not been due to dogma, but largely to the lack of it. Religious dogmatism, in the right sense of the word, means the exact, authoritative teaching of all the doctrines of Christ. The idea must go before the act; teaching must precede doing. A man may have a clear idea without acting; but he will not be able to act efficiently without the clear idea. And how can men give religious service to their fellowmen unless they first have religious knowledge of *what* that service ought to be; *why* it ought to be; *how* and with *what* helps it ought to be performed. The lack of definite religious teaching has caused falling away from religion. Laymen wish to know exactly what they are to believe. On account of the lack of definite teaching, many of them have renounced all religion.

The objection is sometimes urged, that exact teaching limits the liberty of men. It does limit their liberty, just as the exact teaching of the multiplication table limits their liberty;—limits their liberty of saying, for example, that two and two are five. Every known truth limits our liberty. For,

knowing truth, we are no longer free rationally to embrace error. Men are not free to believe what they choose; because, oftentimes, what they choose to believe does not happen to be the truth. A creed, giving us authoritatively what Christ taught, saves us from the freedom of accepting as His teaching what He never taught. Religious dogmatism constrains us; but it also liberates us. For it liberates us from making mistakes. G. K. Chesterton, writing on this subject, says well: "I refer to the monstrous wars about small points of theology, the earthquakes of emotion about a gesture or a word. It was only a matter of an inch; but an inch is everything when you are balancing. The Church could not afford to swerve by a hairbreadth. Once let one idea become less powerful and some other idea would become too powerful. It was no flock of sheep the Christian Shepherd was leading, but a herd of bulls and tigers, of terrible ideals and devouring doctrines, each one of them strong enough to turn to a false religion and lay waste the world. If some small mistakes were made by the Church in doctrine, huge blunders might be made in human happiness. A sentence, framed

wrongly about the nature of symbolism, would have broken all the best statues in Europe. A slip in the definitions might stop all the dances; might wither all the Christmas trees and break all the Easter eggs. Doctrines had to be defined within strict limits, even in order that man might enjoy general human liberties. The Church had to be careful, if only that the world might be careless."

This is the sort of religion I want in our schools, a religion of love, fear, consolation, strength, joy, peace, and exact teaching. Without it culture will not save our country. But such a religion and culture will be a sufficient defense from the threatening catastrophe of infidelity and immorality. Be not therefore, Brethren, like Martha, busied about many secular things, but like Mary sit down at your Savior's feet, choosing the better part.

God grant that you may do this; God grant that Christ may never be obliged to speak to our country as He spoke to Martha; "Columbia, Columbia, thou art troubled about many things; about wealth, war, industry, society; one thing is necessary, that thou love Me above them all; and

love My Father who sent Me." God grant that He may rather say of her, seated like Mary at His Feet; "Columbia hath chosen the better part which shall not be taken away from her."

JESUS AND THE RICH YOUNG MAN

St. Luke, ch. 18, vs. 18–25.

"And a certain ruler asked Him, saying: Good Master, what shall I do to possess eternal life? And Jesus said: Why dost thou call me good? None is good, but God alone. Thou knowest the commandments: Thou shalt not kill; thou shalt not commit adultery; thou shalt not steal; thou shalt not bear false witness; Honor thy father and mother. Who said: All these things I have kept since my youth. Which, when Jesus had heard, He said to him: Yet one thing is wanting to thee; sell all whatever thou hast, and give to the poor; and thou shalt have treasure in heaven, and come, follow me. He, having heard these things, became sorrowful, for he was very rich. And Jesus seeing him become sorrowful said: How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of heaven. For it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God."

HEROISM AND MEDIOCRITY

I see a young man, handsome and fine, olive-skinned, his eyes and hair of jet, perfect in figure and movement, a scion of nobility, rich; his velvet cap set with a jewel; his robe of rare fabric, splendidly dyed, hanging in graceful folds from his shoulders to his knees; his feet encased in sandals all sparkling with gems; his fingers glittering in oriental fashion with diamonds, rubies and emeralds; his voice melodious, his mind cultivated in the schools and his soul transparently simple and pure.

He has heard the new young Prophet Christ; he has observed His works; he has looked into His eyes and been won. At the present moment Jesus is comforting the sick and poor. The young man waits for a moment of intermission in the Master's work, approaches him deferentially and trustfully, and says: Master, what shall I do to be saved?—Jesus answers: Keep the commandments. He says: Master, these have I kept from my youth. What else is want-

ing to me? Jesus looks at him and loves him for his innocence. Then He adds: If thou wilt be perfect, go sell thy goods, give to the poor and thou shalt have treasure in heaven and come follow Me.—The young man changes suddenly. The light goes out of his eyes, his smile shivers and dies, he hangs his head, tears start; it is too much to ask; he cannot buy fellowship with the Son of God at such a price; and so nothing is left him but to depart; and with a heavy heart, without a word, brushing tears from his cheeks, he turns slowly and goes away. Gladly he came, sadly he goes. He knows that Jesus is the pearl beyond price, but he lacks courage to sell his goods to purchase it.

He departs; and throws away his opportunity. Perhaps he did not lose his soul. Perhaps he led a good life till death; a good life of spiritual mediocrity. But the heights! He never scaled the heights; he never breathed the invigorating air of heroism; never felt the thrill of self-sacrifice in the cause of Christ; never expanded with the ambition to conquer worlds; never went forth to the ends of the earth (as he might possibly have been destined to do), with

Peter, John, James and the rest of the Lord's Paladins, with the flashing sword of spiritual conquest, to build up the kingdom of God. And when he breathed his last, an ordinary man in an ordinary palatial home, his heart must have ached and broken to think of what might have been! The Lord had not commanded him, nor threatened him; but had invited him, had done him the unspeakable honor of inviting him to follow Him in His epical expedition against the strongholds of Satanic might; had invited him;—and he had declined! And he dies, crushed with the thought of his sinless, stale, flat insipidity. And when he left Jesus, the Master was sad; for He loved him; and turning to His stout knights of the Apostolic body-guard, He said heavily: How hard for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God! How hard for a man or woman of wealth, social standing, business ambition, learning, professional pre-eminence, to barter these sweet things for Me;—for Me and my poorness, obscurity, laboriousness, persecutions and other-worldliness!

Yes, Brethren, worldliness was then, as it is now, a prime obstacle to the genuine following of Christ. In a sense it is a greater

hindrance than positive sinfulness. For the sinner knows that he is in the wrong; the worldling likes to think that he is in the right. The sinner feels the sting of conscience; the worldling has learned the art of using mental palliatives. The sinner cannot put up an argument for his condition; the worldling can make his case appear quite plausible. And in truth worldliness is not sinfulness. The worldling does good; disobeys no divine command; incurs no guilt; does not deserve the grave displeasure of the Lord; merits no eternal punishment; is justified in hoping for heaven. For, he acquires honestly, holds what is his and enjoys pleasures that are legitimate. Moreover he maintains a state of spiritual respectability. He goes to church; is good to his family; just to his employees; gracious to his friends and loyal to his government. In general, he is what men call good. He lives in the sunshine of fortune and dies, contented that he is what he is. He says to himself: I am not a saint but neither am I a terrible sinner; some are better than I; but many are worse.

Brethren, the worldly man is good; but pray observe, there is not a touch of the

heroic in his life; inspiration has never thrilled him; the lightnings have never flashed across his mind; his cheeks have never glowed, his heart has never jumped, and his brain has never bristled with thoughts of high renown; his fingers have never tingled with the touch of imperishable deeds; his blood has never run faster through his veins at the prospect of joining the plumed chivalry of Christ on the long-drawn battle-front of the two Eternities. Yes, he is good, but not better; middling, but not high; sinless, but not aspiring; not deserving of much punishment, but not deserving of much reward: he is just, but not generous; he is respectable, but not renowned; he is right, but not heroic; he is a soldier of Christ, but not a knight of Christ; he is a servant of Christ, but not a lover of Christ; he is a strict executor of His commands, but not a keen observer of His hints; he is a man that will not scandalize the world by his wickedness, but he will never stir the world, inflame it, magnetize it, set it ablaze and thrill it with his clanking and flashing gallantry. In a word, he is the rich young man of the Gospel story, reincarnated today. When Christ says to him: Keep the com-

mandments, he can truly answer: Master, I have kept them. But when Christ says: Follow Me; and leave your booty of earth, that you may keep up with my rushing march, he saddens and says: "Nay!" And he clings to his load and creeps along the road to the kingdom of God.

How different from the rich youth were Peter, John and James! They were fishermen, making their livelihood by the sea. On the shore they are mending nets. The wind blows refreshingly; the sea sparkles in the radiance of the morning sun. Christ approaches them. They look up at Him. He says: Follow Me! And forthwith they leave all and follow Him. Here we have a contrast indeed. True, they are not rich. Nevertheless they are *men*. The sea invites them; their homes are dear to them; the old hillsides beckon to them. Yet though they know not what He wants; whither He goes; whither they are to follow; what they are to do; what is to be their fate; they accept His call. And in after years, when the Holy Ghost came upon them they rushed forth to the ends of the earth like streams of water from a fountain-head to refresh the world; like flames

from a furnace to warm it; like rays from the sun to enlighten it; like radii from the centre of a circle, with no circumference to limit them in their outward rush of Apostolic eloquence except the circumference of the earth itself. Peter goes to Rome, James to Spain, Thomas to distant India, John to Antioch, and Paul hurries up and down the isles of Greece, his eyes ablaze, his nostrils distended, his lips burning with the red-hot coals of the Lord and his whole frame tremulous with the electricity of heaven. Like living torches they rush onward, until, consumed with their own swift energy, they fall in grey ashes to the ground. Their light goes out, their flame expires, but meanwhile the world is ablaze!

In the early days of Christianity martyrs innumerable heard the word: Follow Me; and they followed Him through fire and sword to the kingdom. The grand old Fathers of the Church heard: Follow Me; and, buckling on the sword of doctrine and eloquence, they went out to meet all comers on the field of controversy in defense of Christianity. The monks of the desert hearkened to His call and abandoned the cities of men for the lairs of the wild, where

in solitude, fasting, and prayer, they got in touch with God and stormed heaven for the salvation of their fellow-men. Missionaries of all ages spied His shadowy figure on the horizon of the world and from the seas' ends heard His faint voice calling them; and they went without scrip or purse, to buy back from Satan with the precious coin of their poverty the lost realms of barbarism and savagery. For nearly 2,000 years boys and girls beyond counting, though deeply in love with the charming things of earth, yet found Christ's spiritual comeliness a greater charm and sold all to follow Him. Monasteries and convent cells have meant more to them than palatial homes; coarse habits, than silken robes; plain fare, than festive boards; silence, than music; and solitude, than gay company; because He has been with them. Finally, mothers and fathers of families, young men and women living in the world have learned the Christian art of denying themselves sometimes, even in licit things, and of accepting many an unpleasantness which they could decline without sin, because their Saviour goes before them in His poverty; and they realize that it is not seemly for them, the servants, to

live in comfort and luxury while the Master lives in want. No, not all are like the rich young man, amiable but cowardly. Not always does He say heavily: How hard for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God! Some men and women emulate the heroism of Peter, John and James; in some men and women Christ finds His consolation and joy.

Christian heroism (perfection), as distinguished from Christian mediocrity, contains four elements; 1st, The love of God and man; 2nd, The sacrifice of worldly goods; 3rd, The personal love and imitation of Christ; 4th, happiness. The love of God and man is the *end* of perfection. The sacrifice of worldly goods is a *necessary means* to that end. The personal love and imitation of Christ are the *best help* for the employment of that means. And happiness, to be enjoyed here and hereafter, is the *reward.*

First, the love of God and man is the end of perfection. For Christ taught that the observance of the two commandments of love in their fulness is the fulfillment of the Law and the Prophets.

Second, the partial sacrifice of worldly

goods is a necessary means. This also Christ taught by example and word. Every page of Scripture bears witness to the necessity. The world charms men into sin. History and our personal experience prove this. Moreover, since man necessarily loves the beautiful and good, it is evident that when he commits sin, which is the quintessence of the ugly and bad, he does so because sin appears to him in some good and beautiful worldly disguise, thus making the world subserve the purposes of wickedness. Now, the world possesses this potent evil seductiveness with regard to us because, while our intellect represents God to us in a cold, speculative manner, our imagination and senses, on the contrary, picture the world to us in a concrete and most appealing way. Thus, though objectively God is more beautiful and good than the world, our sensuous tendency is toward the world, away from God. Of course we are free to resist the tendency, but as a rule we do not resist it unless aided supernaturally. Before the Fall our first parents possessed two preternatural gifts, Science and Integrity. By the first of these they enjoyed a more intimate and appealing knowledge of God than

we enjoy. By the second they were freed from the sensuous tendency toward the world. Those two gifts were lost by original sin. They were not restored to us by Christ. Instead of them He gave us grace, with the help of which we can avoid sin and attain perfection provided we curtail our use of worldly goods.

Third, love and example facilitate the most difficult enterprises. "My yoke is sweet and my burden light." The history of heroic Christianity is the story of marvels done through the inspiration of Christ's winning personality.

Finally a promise of happiness is given by Our Saviour to those who sacrifice themselves for Him. "Blessed (happy) are the poor in spirit."

Now of these four elements of Christian perfection, the most important is the following and personal love of Christ. For, first, if we love Him we are already compassing the end of perfection which is the love of God and the love of men; for Christ is God; and He loved men. If we love Him we shall also wish to love them for His sake. But if we do not know and love Christ, in our eyes God will be divested of

His human charm and our hearts will not readily respond to His divine attraction. Moreover our fellowmen will lack the appeal which, for lovers of Christ, they possess as objects of His special regard. Second, as I said above, the love of Him will make it easy for us to love that unworldliness to which He was wedded, whereas the difficulty of practicing unworldliness is insurmountable without Him. Third, If we love Him and live with Him we shall enjoy a foretaste of heaven upon earth; without Him the quest of happiness will prove to be a deception and a snare.

Hence in our efforts to attain perfection, to be heroic rather than mediocre, to follow Christ as the Apostles did rather than leave Him as the rich youth did, to delight His sacred Heart rather than pain it, we ought to try to conceive a personal love of Christ.

Let us, therefore, do as the Saints did. For the most characteristic feature of the Saints is not their apostolic energy nor the mortification of their lives nor their love of their fellow men nor their regard for God as their Master nor their dread of Him as their Judge nor their fear of hell nor their hope of heaven. But the most character-

istic feature of the Saints is their keen sense of the humanized individuality of the Son of God, His personal lovableness, and their own unspeakable privilege of loving Him as an Individual, not in an ultra-spiritual fashion but with the full glowing ardors of imagination and heart. Whether at Bethlehem or Nazareth or in His public life or upon the Cross or after His resurrection from the dead, He stands before them, looks at them with human eyes, speaks to them with human lips, understands them with a human mind and loves them with a human heart. His Personality is magical, a mystical influence irradiates from His face, His lips are enriched with eloquence, His tongue is steeped in unction, His call to the higher life is enthralling. His whole presence is swathed in an atmosphere of magnetic beauty. They see Him, they hear Him, and forthwith they are spell-bound captives in His hands. Brethren, do as the Saints did; see Christ as He is; love Him; and then, when He says: Sell all and follow Me; you will not hang your head and go away, but will quicken with enthusiasm and exclaim: Whatever the cost may be, Lord, lead Thou the way and I will follow Thee!

Perfection may be aimed at either in Religious life or in the world.

Religious life consists essentially in a life led in community with the approval of the Church, under the three vows of Poverty, Chastity and Obedience, in the practice of the three virtues of those vows, the motive of the practice being the love and imitation of Christ.

Would that Religious life were in as much honor as it deserves to be! If a boy or girl becomes a Religious now-a-days, he or she is looked upon by too many as an anomaly, a disappointed lover, a failure in the world, a person without human emotions and natural ambitions, a selfish seeker of repose, a dodger of the battle of life or as an impractical devotee of mystical prayerfulness; in fact, as anything but a whole-hearted lover and knight of Christ, engaged in an heroic expedition against Satan and his myrmidons for the conquest of the world. If she marry a man, smiles and congratulations await her; but if she marry the Son of God, lamentations and tears! If he choose law, medicine, or business, "more power to you!" they exclaim; if he choose the profession of Christ-worship

and the business of saving souls, they cry: "Alas!"

There was a time when the chief ambition of good Catholic parents was to have a child a religious or priest. In those days many a Catholic woman mingled with the joyous tears of her new motherhood the more joyous tears of an exalted spiritual hope for her babe. And as he grew in wisdom and age, without forcing him she tried to incline him to thoughts of holiness. And when in the flush of his youthful years he left her roof for the novitiate, while her friends sympathized with her for her loss and lamented him as dead, she laughed at their foolishness and exulted in her heart at his spiritual dedication to the King. And on the day of his profession her heart overflowed and in the spirit of Simeon of old she exclaimed: Now, oh Lord, dismiss thy servant in peace; for I have seen the fulfillment of my holiest hope!

Mothers and fathers looked upon Religious life in that way then. Do they take the same view of it now? I have known mothers and fathers, good women and good men, who have placed every obstacle in the way of their children's ambition for the

closer following of our Lord. Ignorance of the real values of things I trust excuses them. Our Saviour invites the child to Religious life, the Church encourages him, but mother or father forsooth objects! What an honor they are seeking to deprive him of, what happiness, what an opportunity of doing marvelous good for souls! Oftentimes too they reap the bitter fruit of their temerity in the form of their son or daughter's unhappiness in the world, in married life, sometimes even in a life of wickedness.

Other parents without going to the extent of actual prevention, discourage, laugh at, remain indifferent to or at least refuse a word of encouragement to their child, so that he has to carry the double burden of heroic self-sacrifice and parental disapproval. Is it not enough for one to give up all for Christ without being thwarted in the giving? Can you not pity and smile upon your own flesh and blood in spiritual throes?

Self-interest ought to dictate to you a willingness to let him follow his star. For while married sons and daughters must transfer their chief affection to their new

partners in life, religious may keep their filial affection unhampered by any other human love. In the second place their going draws down God's blessing upon the household they leave. The family receives a part of the hundred-fold promised by our Lord to the child.

As to the happiness your boy or girl will enjoy in following a religious vocation, I can bear personal witness to it. For I would not exchange a day of my religious life for a year in a palace. There is a hidden manna in retirement; the Lord is very sweet to those who do a little for Him; and Scripture says: One day in the vestibule of thy house O Lord is better than a lifetime in the mansions of emperors. True, Religious life has its pangs and drab monotony. There is in it the garden of Olives and the Mount of Calvary as well as the Mount of Thabor and the Easter Sepulchre. But in dereliction a religious is sustained by God's hand and the Angel of the Olives anoints his wounds.

Again, he teaches the young. "Let the little ones come unto Me and prevent them not." Our Lord delighted in influencing the young. The education of youth is a

splendid work. Most probably that is the work your son or daughter is destined for, if he or she becomes a religious. Oh, happy destiny!

And then their safety and freedom from worldly cares! How well St. Bernard says: "The sanctity of religion causes him who is engaged in it to live more purely, to fall less frequently, to rise sooner, to walk with greater precaution, to be oftener refreshed with heavenly comforts, to repose with greater security, to die with greater confidence, to be purified sooner from his defects and to be more gloriously recompensed."

If the religious be also a priest what words can express the sublimity of his calling? For in his sacerdotal character he sets forth the truth, beauty, majesty and consolation of the Creed, maintains the observance of the Commandments, offers the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and administers the Sacraments.

Brethren, one of the tests of a community's spirituality is its respect for and love of the Religious life. If aught has been lacking in your attitude toward it, amend; so that, God willing, your boy or girl may

go to Christ some day and say: Master, I have kept the commandments; what else is wanting to me?—So that if Christ should say: If thou wouldst be perfect, sell all and follow Me, he or she may not recede sorrowfully from His presence, but rather may join His gallant company.

Perfection may be aimed at in Religious life; it may be aimed at also in the world. It is erroneous to suppose that only religious are to strive for perfection. Our Saviour said to all: "Be ye perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect." Be not satisfied with keeping the commandments; but if you are poor try for Christ's dear sake to bear your poverty with a grace, remembering that for your sake He was born in a stable, lived in a cottage, consorted with poor men, died poor. If you are rich, be not attached to your wealth; use it, do not abuse it; use it, do not let it use you; be its master, not its slave; think more of the good you can do with it than of the pleasures you can procure with it. At times retrench your gratifications even when you are not obliged; do more than enough; stick not to the line of the Commandments; withdraw to the line of the Counsels; accept Christ's invitations,

listen to His suggestions, be keen to His hints, do not stop short at His orders and prohibitions; in a word be heroic, not mediocre. When Christ says: Give to the poor, do not look wry but with a smile say: Master, what is mine is Thine; take as much as Thou wilt. And Brethren He will speak to you in your heart and you will understand in detail what he expects of you.

And pray do not imagine that in speaking against worldliness in favor of self-conquest, I am puritanically taking up arms against human happiness. No, I am a staunch defender of that. God gives us blessings of earth that we may be happy here. We cannot live exclusively on the hope of the hereafter. Joy in life is intended by Providence to make life more energetic and holy. Bright faces, bright homes, a bright and merry citizenship are the sort God wants. For He is the God of joy. Hence the normal amusements of life; feasting, dancing, music, social affairs in general, reading and conversation are ornaments of Christian society; they can and ought to lend themselves to the spirit of Christianity.

Therefore, Swinburne's oft-quoted line:

"Thou hast conquered, O pale Galilean,
And the world has grown grey with Thy breath"

is false and blasphemous. Christ never preached by example or word against feasting, dancing, music, singing and sociability; against wine, tobacco or beer; against nice garments, nice manners and winsomeness. There were no blue-laws in His code; no long faces in His following; no blue-nosed dispensers of vinegar who after all are as bad as the red-nosed imbibers of whiskey and wine. But He said some fierce things against hypocrites who called Him a wine-bibber and wondered at the merriment of His followers; who raged, no doubt, at His changing water into wine to regale guests at a wedding feast; and at His gift of His body and blood under the appearance of bread and wine; who washed the outside, not the inside, of the cup; prided themselves on external observances; fasted with long faces, wore sack-cloth, sprinkled themselves with ashes and heralded their austerities; who tried to take all the fun out of life and to cover religion with a pall; and then, after shutting off all faucets and smashing all bottles for the spiritual uplift of the lower

crust of society, no doubt drank pottle-deep in their well-stocked cellars at home.

But Christ taught that too much of a good thing is not good; that unless we curb our love of the world in licit things, we shall pass on to illicit things; and that the doing of the heroic, whether it be in civil, military, or religious life, does postulate detachment from comforts and luxuries and a manly acceptance of the unpleasant and hard. Surely our late experience in the war proves that; proves that if we wish to follow a leader worth while in an enterprise worth while we must sell our goods; we must part with much.

Now, this law of self-conquest does not cause unhappiness. Rather happiness is found in self-conquest where it is not expected. It is strange but true that self-conquest gives a rare verve and tang and thrill to life. Again, your war's experience may be offered in evidence. Those who worked and fought well, experienced what I may call the fine frenzy of enthusiasm. Their souls were exalted with high thoughts. Their sinews were tense with energy. The fibers of their spirits were electric with the thrill of self-sacrifice endured in the cause

of country. They rose to the plane of the heroic; and there, in company with self-sacrifice, they found happiness. Moreover the mortified enjoy their few comforts more keenly than the unmortified.

Again, if you wish to see a joyless life go to the devotee of worldliness who flees self-repression as he would flee death and expends his best energies in trying to gratify himself. To him pleasure has become stale. Success palls on him. The palate of his soul has become cloyed with sweets. For him the newness and freshness of life have worn off. He is old and dried up in soul before his time. He has pampered himself and therefore suffers from an inevitable insipidity. No, the worldling is not the happy man! The rich youth who went away selfishly was not the happy man! But the poor Christ and His Apostles tasted deeply of happiness!

. . . . . .

In imagination I see each one of you standing before Christ tonight. I hear Christ say: If thou wouldst be perfect sell thy goods, give to the poor and follow Me. And I see you (each one according to your means and after the manner and to the ex-

tent suggested to you by Christ in prayer), taking off your velvet cap, your rich coat, your gemmy sandals and jeweled rings and placing them at the feet of Christ; and I see Christ clothing you anew in the plain but heroic style of His Apostles and Himself.

JOEL AND THE JEWS

Joel, ch. 2, vs. 12–19.

"Now therefore saith the Lord: Be converted to me with all your heart, in fasting and in mourning and in weeping. And rend your hearts and not your garments and turn to the Lord, your God: for he is gracious and merciful and rich in mercy and ready to repent of the evil. Who knoweth but that he will return and forgive and leave a blessing behind him, sacrifice and libation to the Lord, your God? Blow the trumpet in Sion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly, gather together the people, sanctify the church, assemble the ancients, gather together the little ones and them that suck at the breast; let the bride and bride-groom go forth. Between the porch and the altar the priests, the Lord's ministers, shall weep and shall say: Spare, oh Lord, spare thy people, and give not thy inheritance to reproach, that the heathen should rule over them. Why should they say among the nations: Where is their God? The Lord hath been zealous for his land and hath spared his people. And the Lord answering said to his people: Behold I will send you corn and wine and oil, and you shall be filled with them; and I will no more make you a reproach among the nations."

SORROW FOR SIN

Lent is a peculiarly Catholic observance. But like many another peculiarly Catholic observance, it has been taken up by the world. The world acknowledges Lent. But it does so sentimentally. The sum-total of the world's acknowledgment of Lent consists in a few violet trimmings added to feminine attire, a few extra quotations from sermons in the daily press, an assumed gravity of deportment, a religious play or two on the movie screen, a superficial indulgence in the luxury of devotion, a slight toying with the things of eternity, the substitution of a sombre spray of flowers at the dinner table for a brilliant spray, pious pictures, hymns in chapel and hot cross-buns in the dining-room.

These things are not bad. Indeed they are good. But they are no indication of a truly penitential and contrite heart. Taken by themselves, they serve only to break the monotony of a worldly life. They are only novel forms of the luxury of emotional in-

dulgence; and the best proof of this is, that at the end of Lent the men and women who practiced them pass on with marvelous versatility to brilliant and heartless courses of worldliness in the months that follow. No, the world is hardly a trustworthy teacher of the spirit of Lent.

If we really wish to know what Lent means, and to live in accord with its requirements we must sit down at the foot-stool of the Church. The Church is the representative and spouse of Christ. She knows the secrets of His heart, she understands His mysteries, she has learned His lessons, and she alone can teach them.

From her dogmatic chair she explains to the minds of men the intellectual significance of His truths; and from her chair of devotion she sets forth for the hearts of men the unctious spirit of His truths.

During the months preceding Lent she steeped our souls in the meaning of the first great act of the drama of salvation, and perhaps even yet the charming atmosphere of Christmas, the feast of joy, clings to our memory. Tonight she approaches the last great act, and as she opens the book of the Passion and Death of Christ we feel even

now coming over us and encircling us the holy subduing shadows of the Cross, from which the Paschal lights will burst on Easter morn.

If we read the Church's literature for Lent, i. e. the daily Lenten Office and daily Mass, we shall see at a glance that the burden, the prevalent color, the dominant note of Lent develops out of four great truths: sin, repentance, and the justice and mercy of God. These four truths run through every page of Lenten literature. They occur in the Gospels and Epistles, the Lamentations and Prophecies, and in the prayers of the Office and Mass.

Ash Wednesday, for instance, opens with the trumpet-call of Joel the Prophet: "Be converted to me with all your heart, in fasting, lamentations and tears; and rend not your garments, but your hearts, saith the Lord: be converted to the Lord your God. For He is kind and merciful, patient, abounding in pity and forgetful of your wickedness. Who knows but that He will turn toward you and forgive and leave a blessing behind Him. Blare out, therefore, ye trumpeters, from the walls of Sion, sanctify a fast, gather the people; throng the

temple ye old men and children; ye brides and bridegrooms leave your delights. For, behold, the priests of God, lamenting between the vestibule and altar, are imploring God: 'Spare, Oh Lord, spare Thy people, and be not angry with us forever.'" And the Lord answering, said to His people: "Behold I shall enrich you with grain and wine and oil; and I shall not allow you to become the laughing-stock of your enemies, saith the Lord Omnipotent." Sin and the consciousness of sin, penance, fear of God, hope and trust in Him, God the just and merciful;—these were the theme of the Prophet's arousing appeal. And the people heard His voice and their sins were forgiven them.

The Church calls you as the Prophet called them. Centuries have gone by since then, but the poor hearts of men are the same now in Detroit as they were in Jerusalem of old. Men still sin. And the Church, like a prophetess of Christ, cries out to the city of business and pleasure from her turrets and belfries: "Come and do penance, pray and hear God's word that your sins may be pardoned you; for God is merciful and kind."—And you have come that

with the priests at the altar you may exclaim with humble and contrite hearts: "Spare, Oh Lord, spare Thy people and be not angry with us forever."

How different is the lenten call of the Church from the lenten call of the world! The world panders to vanity even in her penitence. Her mourning is superficial. Her sackcloth has a touch of theatric display. Her tears are shed artistically and her lamentations are uttered with an eye to elocutionary effect. She coddles her devotees, wins them over to a transitory mock-grief and then assures them that they have done their part and all is well. But the Church comes with a sword and smites. She says: "You have sinned. Sin is a monstrous thing. God is holy and just. He hates sin and must hate the sinner until he repents. How can you remain as you are? There is a hell awaiting you. Death may take you by surprise. Awake. Realize what you have been. Take sack-cloth and ashes. Weep, pray, fast, strike your breast, raise your eyes to heaven, confess your sins, for God is merciful and will forgive!"

By the true children of the Church, educated by her teaching on sin, this trenchant

address is understood and absorbed. For they know what they are in the sight of God. But worldly men and women stand aghast at such effrontery. Speak to them thus! Are they not respectable? Who can show a stain on their escutcheon? Are they not the idols of society? Fair in business? Good to their families? Generous to their friends? Courteous to all? Why not speak of the happiness of heaven, the beauty of virtue, the amiability of Christ, the brotherhood of man? Or of literature, art, learning, culture, refinement, social tone, as being invaluable helps to religious life? Why harp on sin, penance and hell? Or, if you must do so, why not at least drape those ugly truths artistically? Or treat of them intellectually, in a detached, impersonal way? But, above all, why direct your remarks toward us with such inconsiderate, tactless, disturbing, crude and even vulgar incisiveness of address? Brethren, I can imagine how Joel the Prophet of old would answer them. He would not mince words, but would say that he speaks to them of sin because they are steeped in it, and of hell because they are on the road to it, and of a just God because His arm is raised to strike.

I could also refer them to One who was the meekest of men; to the Lamb of God who roared like a lion against the sins of men. His was not a diluted Christianity like too many milk and water forms of Christianity of the present day. He drove at sin like a thunderbolt. His denunciations were like lightning from the sky. He spoke to hypocrites, adulterers, prevaricators, detractors, despoilers of the poor, liars and haters of their fellowmen as if he really thought their sins *were* sins. There were rich men in His day as now, noblemen from the golden mansion of Herod, educated men from the University of Athens, army officers, merchants, litterateurs, poets, orators, princes and priests; men and women of exquisite address, refined in their sentiments, keen and quick of mind, graceful in speech, witty, polished in their deportment, finished to the finger-tips:—and He spoke to them, not according to their esthetic tastes but according to His knowledge of their moral needs; not according to the laws of an effete civilization but according to the canons of Mt. Sinai; not to please their ears but to pierce their hearts. And if Christ came to Detroit today He would shat-

ter, once and for all, the mawkish ideal of Him in the minds of religious sentimentalists who picture Him as all sweet, all good, all gracious, but forget that He is also all holy and all just. They would see Him as the Lion of Judah, His eyes flashing, His nostrils quivering, His cheeks aglow and His voice tremulous with scathing denunciation of sin. They would see Him as the Pharisees saw Him and they would not expostulate with Him for His untamed method of speech; but fear would come upon them and their knees would knock with terrible dread and they would hide their faces from His gaze.

Why did Joel of old, why did Christ in the New Testament, why does the Church today swell to their strongest note when their topic is sin? Because they knew and she knows what sin is. And why do worldlings consider their denunciations extravagant? Because they think that sin is not a fact in the world, or knowing it to be a fact they minimize its enormity, or admitting its enormity they do not understand why they should atone for it.

Sin is a fact in the world. God looks down from His high place upon the sad

scene of earth. He sees men and women of all sorts, of all nations, times and climes, of all degrees of wealth and poverty, of all grades of society; the lords and ladies of the earth and the denizens of the slums; some in the first blush of youth, some putting forth the energies of maturity and others declining into old age; some keeping high festivity, others in the slough of despond; but all of them marred, more or less, by the blight of sin.

He sees sin inscribed on the door-posts of the home; sin sitting complacently at the fire-place, and laughing with children and parents at the domestic board; sin in the cabinets of kings, at the head of armies and in the rank and file; sin in the counting-house, in the factory and marts of trade; sin in ships that course the deep and in palatial trains crossing continents; sin wantoning upon the stage, whirling in the social dance and promenading the avenues and boulevards; sin in literature, sin in science, sin in art; sin peeping out through the eye, hiding in the hollow of the ear, electrifying the clasp of the hand and debasing the coinage of the lips; sin quickening the fingers for nimble theft, arousing the passions of

the flesh, and sandalling the feet for paths of wickedness; sin darkening the windows of the mind, smirching the canvas of fancy and poisoning the wells of the heart; sin lining the robes of aristocrats, and interwoven with the sordid rags of the off-scouring of humanity in the slums.

Brethren, is this vision only a dream or is it a fact? Alas, it is a fact. For sin is as common as water; as all-pervading as sunshine and air. St. John says: "If any man say he is without sin, he is a liar." St. Paul tells the Romans that by one man came sin into the world, and through sin came death, and death passed to all men in whom all have sinned. We all have original sin; and by original sin were loosened those passions whereby we all have actual sin, whether mortal or venial, unless a special privilege of God be given, as it was to Her the Immaculate, to whom we say: "Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord, and not sin, is with thee."

How then can worldly men and women take sin so lightly? How can they dare say that sin is nothing; a trifle at worst; a mere phantom created by over-wrought religious minds? A thing which passes away

from the soul with the passing thought, word, or action which introduced it? An amiable weakness of the flesh, a peccadillo, a slip which God laughs at rather than hates? How can they ask: Since God gave us passions, why may we not indulge them as we please? And say that a man is no more responsible for moral weakness than for physical defects of face and form? How can they believe that qualms of conscience are only unpleasant dreams of the night of medieval ignorance, which we must forget, forsooth, in the day-light of modern science; that the burning stings of remorse are only an evidence of an unhealthy squeamishness of mind? How can they teach that the world is good and beautiful, without flaw; that men and women are all that God and nature have a right to expect them to be; and that the Church which persists in preaching sin, penance and hell is a gloomy pessimist? How, indeed, with the tremendous vision and fact of sin staring them in the face?

We said that the principal truths of Lent are sin, penance, the Justice and Mercy of God. Joel the Prophet preached sin and called to penance. To another great

Prophet it was left to set before men the principal proof of the enormity of sin and the mercy of God. Isaias is the Prophet and Preacher of Christ crucified for sin. He foresaw through the centuries the Son of God on Calvary, and his description of His sufferings has the keen freshness of an eye-witness. How can any man or woman read the fifty-third chapter of Isaias without being touched to the heart and without realizing that no denunciation of the Church is too severe for him who by his sins brought down our dear Lord to such depths of shame and suffering! Listen to the inspired words, Brethren, and try to realize with contrite hearts what you have done to the Son of God. "Who hath believed our report," says Isaias, "and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? And He shall grow up as a tender plant before Him and as a root out of a thirsty soil. There is no beauty in Him, nor comeliness; and we have seen Him and there was no sightliness that we should be desirous of Him. Despised and the most abject of men, a Man of Sorrows and acquainted with infirmity; and His look was as it were hidden and despised, whereupon we esteemed Him not. Surely He hath

borne our infirmities and carried our sorrows; and we have thought Him as it were a leper and as one struck by God and afflicted. But He was wounded for our iniquities, He was bruised for our sins; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him and by His bruises we were healed. And all we like sheep have gone astray; each one hath turned aside into his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." Yes, Brethren, we have sinned and He has suffered in our place. Can we have the heart, at the foot of the Cross, to think of our sinful past without repentance?

Let us kneel at the foot of the Cross in spirit like Mary Magdalene during Holy Week. Let us gaze sorrowfully at that figure and that face; at those nails, that crown of thorns, that spear, that cross; at those piercéd hands and feet and side and brow; at those bloodshot eyes and parched lips. Let us listen to His prayer: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do;" and let us love Him, our dear and dying Saviour, for what He is enduring for our sins.

Sin is a fact; an enormous fact. This much, I trust, is evident now. Finally, for

this enormous fact we must atone. Adam sinned and we his children have all sinned with him. God could have left the fallen human race to its eternal fate as He left the angels to theirs; but He pitied us. "I will not leave thee," He says, "neither will I forsake thee. Can a woman forget her infant; and if she should forget, yet will not I forget; for I have loved thee with an everlasting love." Again, having once resolved to pardon man, He could have pardoned him without requiring atonement for sin:—gratuitously, out of His beneficent bounty; He could have looked down upon the sinning world and simply said: "It is my will, be thou made clean!" Again, having once resolved to require atonement from man before pardoning him, He could have been satisfied with inadequate atonement, such as was offered by the priests of the Old Testament in the sacrifices of the Temple of Jerusalem; such as is offered now in the world every day upon the altar of the human heart in the form of prayers and penances. Finally, having determined to require adequate atonement at the hands of Christ, He could have been appeased by that alone.

But He decreed that we also should add

our mite of atonement to the infinitely valuable atonement of the Son of God. This in brief is the meaning of the economy of salvation. In justice, some satisfaction had to be offered to God. The balance, the equilibrium, of sovereignty and dependence between God and man, destroyed by sin, had to be reset; reset by man who destroyed it; reset by the endurance of pain; for as the balance was broken by sinful pleasure it ought to be reset by virtuous pain. God was pained by sin; men ought to be pained by penance for sin. In justice there must be an equalizing of unpleasantness. The unpleasantness to God is sin; the unpleasantness to us is satisfaction for sin. God was hurt by our offences, we must submit to being hurt by His punishments. Christ endured His share for us on the Cross and we in the spirit of atonement must endure our share.

In the light of these truths the mystery of the Cross set up in the world and of a crucified world at the foot of the Cross is now, I trust, understood.

Had the first Adam not sinned under the tree of life there would have been no need of the second Adam atoning for sin on the tree

of death. Had the father of men not tasted the sweet fruit, the Son of Man would not have tasted the vinegar and gall. And had we the children of Adam not sinned with him by inheritance and also on our own account, our place would not now be on Calvary but in Paradise. Death would not be nor a painful life had sin not been. We should then not have to read the Passion and Death of Christ nor keep lent nor fast nor weep nor wear sack-cloth nor decline any of the licit pleasures of the world. We should then not be members of a Church, one of whose dominant notes is sorrow and penitence. We should then not occasion the question which is now so often put to us by the world: "Why do you Catholics take a pessimistic view of life? Is the world not bright and full of energy? Is it not good enough for you? Why are you taught to decline its pleasures? Is not the human soul a beautiful thing? Why should it not rejoice in its beauty and use all its natural energies to the full, cheerfully? Why do you deface its loveliness with sorrow and tears? And is not the body a temple of the Holy Ghost? If so, why, as you adorn a material temple of God with lovely ornaments, do you not

also adorn it lavishly for His sake? Where is the wreath of roses, where the necklaces, where the jeweled rings; where the soft garments, the splendid robes? Where are the golden cups for the lips of man and the splendid visions for the eyes of man and fragrances for his nostrils and music for his ears? Is not the human body a temple of God? And, if so, why should it not be honored as such? Why have the Saints considered their bodies their enemies? Why have they scourged them? And stinted them with food and drink? And pained them with hair-clothes? And arrayed them in black and grey? Why are their eyes dim with tears and their faces wan and their senses divorced from pleasantness? Why do they decline the world and seek solitary sands of the desert or cloistered walls? Or why, living in the midst of the splendor of the world, do they keep their hearts detached from it? Does not all this seem pessimistic and paradoxical? Does it not appear to be a churlish refusal to use God's good gifts for the purpose of enriching with delightful variety the fleshly temple of the Holy Ghost?"

Men who ask questions like these either

do not realize that Adam sinned and we with him, or they do not realize that sin is an unspeakable enormity, or they do not realize that God required in atonement for sin the death of Christ on the Cross and the crucified life of men in union with His death.

Had we remained innocent in Paradise our bodies and souls would have deserved all the commendation which such questioners confer upon them, pleasure-seekers would be justified, and the saints would be deserving of condemnation for their mortified lives. But since we fell our bodies and souls have been corrupted and they need cleansing; they were intended to be houses of prayer; but we and Satan have made them dens of thieves. Wherefore it is fitting that they should resound with the swish and fall of Christ's knotted whip. Since we fell, our bodies and souls ought to be forced to make painful atonement for their sins. To some extent, the crown of thorns must replace the wreath of flowers, tears must shine instead of smiles, bread and water must be substituted for toothsome morsels and rich draughts, plain garments must be preferred to splendid robes, lamentations must sound above glad airs, retirement must prevail

over social display, silence must replace liberty of tongue, holy sorrow must cast its subduing shadow upon merriment, and the world must have some of its splendor eclipsed. To some extent all this must be done because we are not innocent, but under the curse of sin; we have a debt to pay to God for having offended Him; we must atone for the past; we must afflict our bodies and souls which afflicted God. They offended Him; we must offend them. They sinned by pleasure; they must become sinless again by pain. They were, in the past, enemies of God; we, now friends of God, must treat them harshly as having been His enemies. This is the meaning of penance in the Church; this is the meaning of atonement for sin. And any man or woman who refuses to put himself or herself in accord with it, is missing the first obligation of Christian life.

But you may say: The obligation of atonement lies upon the shoulders of those who have sinned. That is clear, but I have not sinned, at least not grievously.—Brethren, can any intelligent Christian seriously decline penance on the score of sinlessness? If so I would ask him: What of your sod-

den mediocrity in the spiritual life, your prostrate indifference to the enthusiastic approaches of Christ? What of your indulgence of personal ease? Your lack of aggressiveness in getting away from yourself and approaching God? Are you taking heaven by violence? Are you daily conquering self? Are you trying to be perfect as your Heavenly Father is perfect? And in regard to charity, do you treat men and women as though they were Marys and Christs? What about your detractions, exaggerations and perhaps your calumnies? Your bitter thoughts and scornful looks and cutting words? Do you not, in plain language, sleep too much, eat and drink too much, talk too much, hear too much, and see too much? And in regard to prayer, do you ever sit down and keep company with yourself and God in the secret chamber of your own soul? Do you not habitually live abroad—a stranger to your own heart? And what of the spiritual ideals of your early years neglected? The high aspirations smothered? The promises to our Saviour unfulfilled? What of your sloth which you dignify with the name of genteel ease? Your harsh judgments which you defend as

just censures? Your back-biting which you characterize offhandedly as the seasoning without which conversation would be monotonous and dull? What of your mediocrity in pious practices which you call common-sense religion? What of your coldness to those of low degree which you explain as the maintenance of social distinctions? Your conceit which you call tone? Your pride which you call self-respect? Your flatteries which you call compliments? Your double-dealing which you call diplomacy? Your lies which you consider necessities of social life? What of your thefts which you call business, and your refusal to pay your debts which you think shrewdness? Your stinginess which you characterize as thrift, or your extravagance which you defend as necessary expenditure? What of your anger which you praise as spirit? Your prurient curiosity in reading questionable books which you defend as love of knowledge? The risks you take in regard to the sixth commandment which you call seeing life? Your debauches in dress and dance which you call necessary conformity to the rules of style; and your attendance at plays at which even the public press is shocked?

Brethren, do not imagine for a moment that I delight in fault-finding; in fact I myself am guilty on many of the heads which I have been proposing to you. No, but I question you, to put before your minds and my own mind the absurdity of declining penance on the plea of freedom from sin. Some of these sins are called venial not because they are slight in themselves but only because they are less offensive than mortal sin. They make us eye-sores in the sight of God. Let us not forget that. And when we think of ourselves, let us not think only of our respectability in society, our wealth, our honors, our learning, culture, refinement, our taste, our good looks, our manners, our success, our popularity. For these accomplishments and gifts, however fair they may be to the eyes of man and however graceful they may be as ornaments of sanctity, cannot counter-balance the ugliness of mortal and venial sin; cannot blind the eye of God to our moral deformities and cannot justify us in dispensing with the severe practice of penance as atonement for our wickedness and defects.

And do not imagine for a moment that God is a martinet; that He takes offence

where none exists and that He does not take into account the good in us. We are good, thanks be to God! How much goodness there is in the world! You know men and women who radiate virtue. Kindliness, good-will, domestic bliss, honesty, courage, purity, love of the poor, strong faith and hope in God and love of Him are not strangers to earth. And in your own heart you may be conscious of a sincere desire to serve and perhaps of heroic efforts made to avoid sin. We are good; we know it; God knows it and appreciates our amiability more than we; and He graciously accepts our marred work and consoles us. God is not excessively exacting. He is not over-critical. But He sees, as He must see, as the Saints saw and as we ought to try to see, that our lives are patchworks, our steps are halting, our eyes are dim, our hands are weak for good. Let us not close our eyes to the fact that ever since the Fall there has been something gravely wrong in the world. Humanity is out of joint. There is a universal blight on the nature of man. His moral beauty is withered in some of its leaves and petals almost from the bud. Hardly have boys and girls bloomed into youth and mai-

denhood when they experience the touches of passion and too often succumb. The beauty of inanimate and irrational nature, under normal conditions, is perfect; but the moral beauty of all men is ragged at the edges at its best. A rose buds, blooms and lives its allotted space in its red or white loveliness; then only does it wither and die. But the human soul has hardly budded into consciousness when it begins to fail. This is the most pathetic fact of human life, more heart-stirring than war or death. Even the pagan philosophers of Rome and Greece could see the inherent universal decadence in the poor soul of man; and they concluded to the existence of some tremendous wound in the heart of humanity, to some initial catastrophe in history, to a poisoning of the head-waters of the stream of human life; in other words, to the existence of original sin. We Christians know also by Revelation that original sin was a fact and that by it were loosened those passions of the heart which occasion all our actual sins, whether mortal or venial. Brethren, let us not flatter ourselves, let us see our daily sins and do penance to atone for them.

Repent for the past and you will taste the

peace of God. And the Lord answering, said to his people through Joel: "Behold I shall enrich you with grain and wine and oil, and I shall not allow you to become the laughing-stock of your enemies." Yes, if you repent, He will enrich you from the Cross with the grain of His flesh to strengthen you, with the wine of His blood to cheer you and with the oil of His love to anoint the crusted wounds of your soul. Oh the bitter sweet of penitential sorrow at the foot of the Cross! As the precious ointment in the alabaster box of Magdalene filled the house of Simon the Leper with delightful fragrances, so the unction of penitential grief steeps the soul in an aroma of spiritual content. Sorrow is there, regret for the past, hatred of sin, fear of God; but these austere sentiments are mingled with hope and confidence and peace and love. David said, "An humble and contrite heart, Oh Lord, Thou wilt not despise," for he felt the lowly happiness of being loved again by God. David was happier prostrate upon the ground than he had been upon his throne. With ashes on his head and tears in his eyes and sack-cloth around him, his spirit was at rest; and his psalms gave vent

to the love and joy and calm gratitude which were too great to remain unsung. The bitter tears which Peter shed for denying his dear Lord were sweet; and when the risen Christ said to him with seeming doubt: "Simon, lovest thou Me?" there was anguish (ah, but it was an exquisite anguish; a delight of pain!); in his broken-hearted answer: "Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee." And when Christ, seated amid the palatial splendors of the house of Simon, said to Magdalene lying in her regal beauty at His feet like a gorgeous flower crushed and broken from the stem: "Thy sins are forgiven thee," her swimming eyes and the quick flush that fingered the alabaster of her face and her open mouth and her heaving bosom and her clasped hands were eloquent of the thrill of ecstasy shot through her soul by the keen-edged sword of penitence, as she rose to her feet and passed out speechless into the night.

And so it has been through the centuries. The Church, the Bride of Christ, in mourning weeds during Lent smiles through Her tears. Penitents in the confessional are soothed by the consolations of the Holy Ghost and those who keep Lent faithfully,

feast in their fasts and prayers. Truly if we repent, God enriches us with grain and wine and oil.

God adds: "You will not become a laughing-stock to your enemies." The world, Brethren, will envy you. The world would give half its kingdom to possess the priceless pearl of your peace; a peace which the world cannot give nor take away nor obtain for itself. It knows that beneath the tawdry brilliancy of its votaries there are empty, thirsting, hungering, embittered hearts; and that your penitential garb is only a sombre covering upon glad spirits. It would like to kneel and pray and fast with you. But it is caught too tightly in the meshes of vanity and sin.

But if perchance some do not understand, and mock, they will not make a laughing-stock of you; but rather your answer will make a laughing-stock of them. For if they say to you: Look you, the world is bright! Why do you lenten pessimists make it dark? Nature invites to activity and joy! Why do you cloak yourselves in sombre thoughts? The sky is blue, the air is crisp, the sun shines, the earth is beautiful!—Brethren, you, standing in spirit on Cal-

vary, may rebuke them in these words: Nay, not so! For, the face of nature is o'ercast. The sun is darkened, the earth quakes, the rocks are rent, tombs open and the sheeted dead are in the streets! And if they say: Look you, the faces of men are bright, answer them: Yes, but the face of the Man of men is wan! And if they say: Look you, our hearts are wells of happiness! Answer them: Perhaps; but we know that our hearts are broken cisterns, parched with the heat of a sinful life.—*You* are wedded to the brilliant present; *we* are weeping over our own dead past; *you* are rejoicing in the life of the world; *we* are "in mourning for the death of God!"

THE END

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